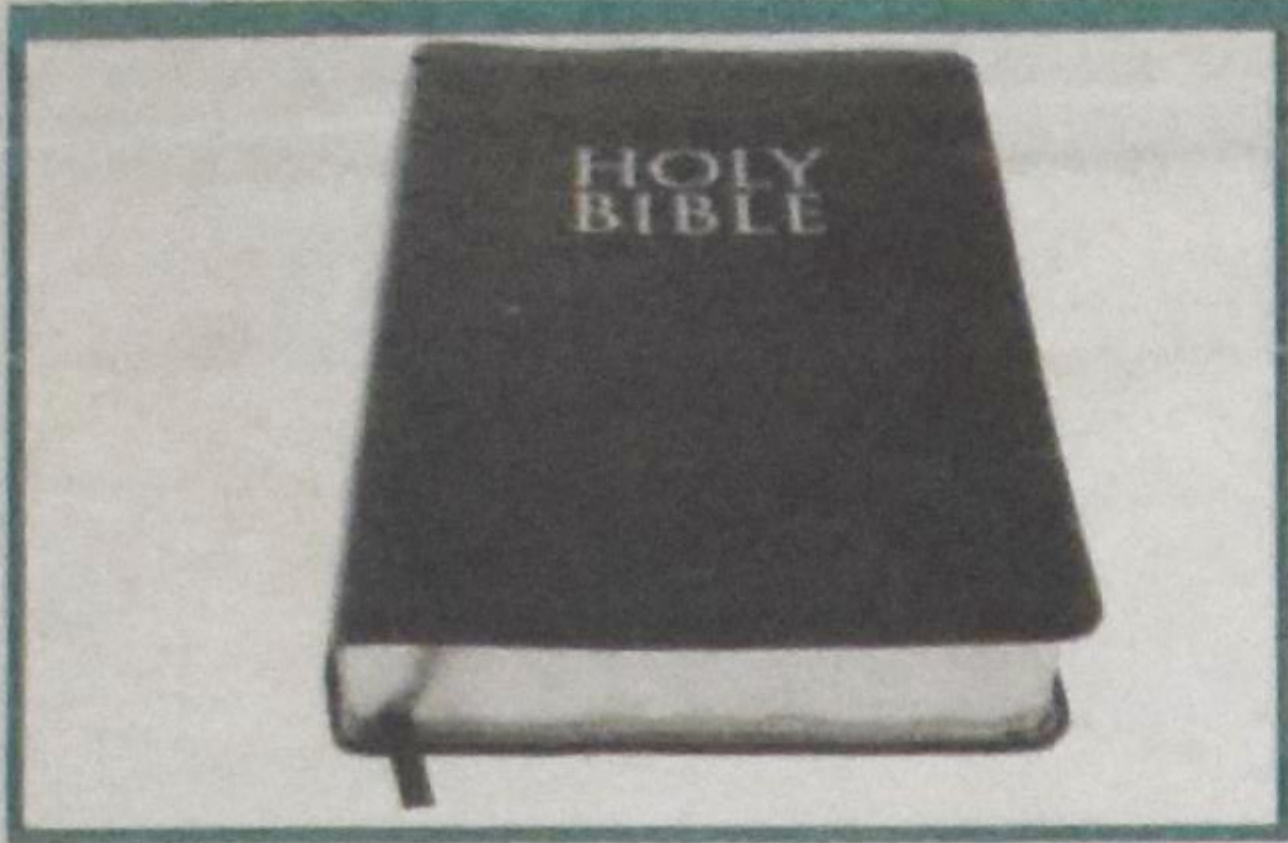




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Attawapiskat and the First Nations crisis

Chandra Pasma

Before Christmas, Canadians were shocked to see the living conditions in Attawapiskat, a First Nation community in Northern Ontario. In -20 C weather, families were living in tents and plywood shacks with no insulation, heated only by a single wood stove. Children suffered from rashes, respiratory infections and burns from the wood stoves. Sewage was being dumped in a ditch. The Canadian Red Cross moved in to help – this was a humanitarian crisis in our own back yard.

But it was a humanitarian crisis that had been going on for awhile, and one that is not limited to Attawapiskat. Attawapiskat declared a state of emergency – its third in three years – at the end of October, but it took a month



Inadequate housing in Attawapiskat.

before federal and provincial governments responded to the cry for help. Meanwhile, other First Nations communities are also

confronting severe housing and infrastructure crises, without the high profile attention being paid to Attawapiskat.

In many northern communities, housing quality is an issue, with homes that are too small, poorly constructed or contaminated by toxic mould. For example, in the Sandy Bay Nation of Northern Manitoba, 300 families in a community of 3,200 people are on a waiting list for housing. Willard Beaulieu, who lives in a house with mould, cockroaches and a sinking floor, told CBC News he had to “try to make the best of it.”

The Assembly of First Nations estimates that 85,000 new homes are required to meet the housing shortage confronting First Nations. And 41.5 percent of existing homes need repairs, compared to only seven percent of non-Aboriginal homes.

Safe drinking water is also an issue for First Nations. In October 2011, more than 20 percent of

First Nations communities had a drinking water advisory. Of these, 70 percent had been in place for two years or more, with 38 percent in place for five years or more. In 2005, more than 800 members of the Kashechewan community, which neighbours Attawapiskat, had to be evacuated due to E.coli in their water. Much like with Attawapiskat, both the federal and provincial governments dragged their heels before finally taking action in response to the crisis.

A flawed relationship

There is a tendency in the rest of Canada to respond with bewilderment to such crises in our First Nations communities. Why don't they just build adequate housing and infrastructure, we wonder.

See Crisis on page 2

Implications of the ruling on polygamy in B.C.

Kathy Vandergrift

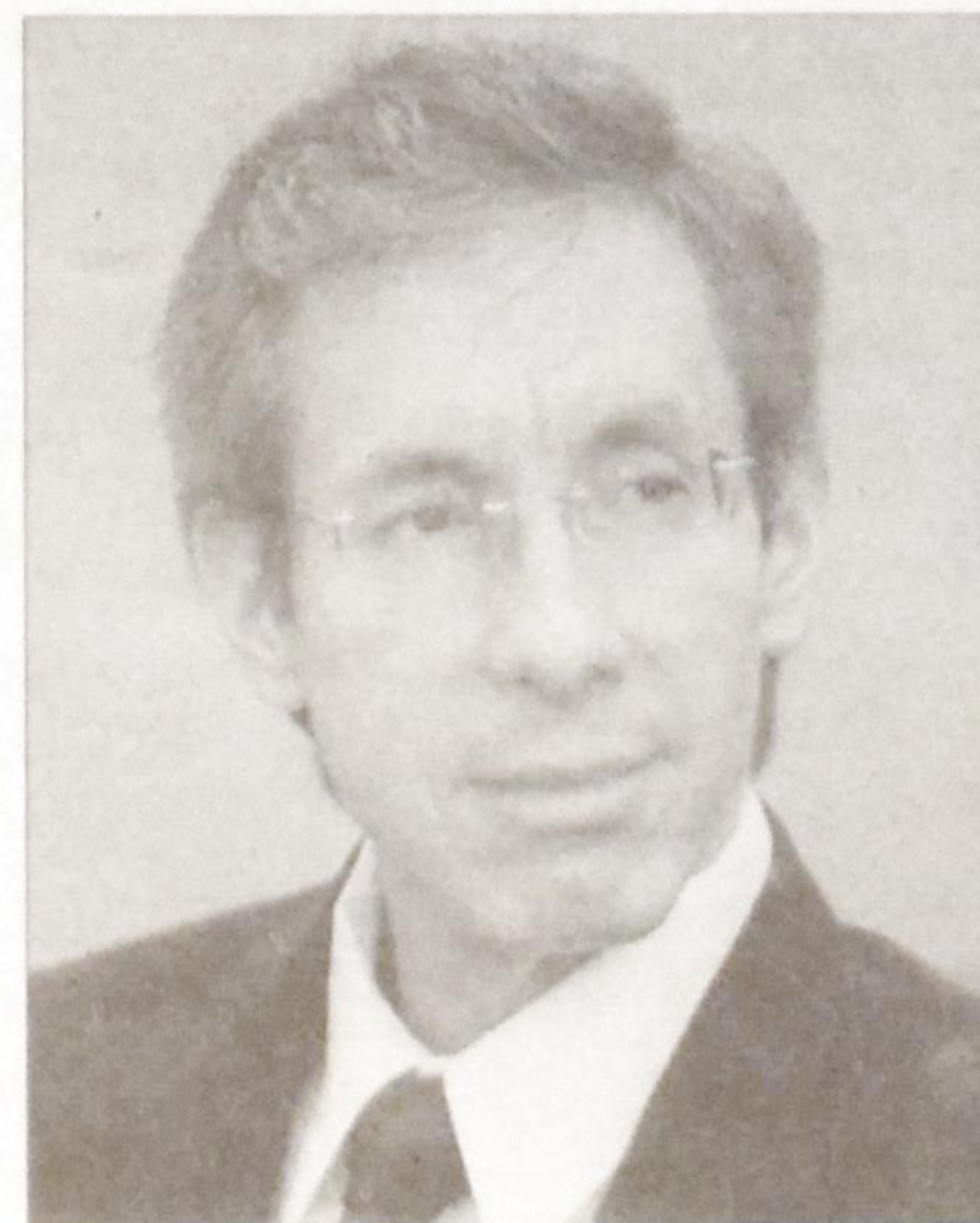
“I have concluded that this case is essentially about harm,” wrote Chief Justice Robert Bauman in the B.C. Supreme Court ruling that upheld the prohibition of polygamy in section 293 of the criminal code. After a year of gathering world-wide evidence about polygamy, hearing from experts, and listening to first-hand testimony, the court ruled that prohibiting polygamy does infringe on the religious freedom rights of those who practice it, but that infringement is justified by the state's duty to protect the rights of children and women. “Polygamy is not to be protected by religious

freedom as the practice tends to deprive women and children of their fundamental rights,” Judge Bauman wrote. The ruling establishes an important precedent for resolving conflicting rights claims, but it also raises new questions in the field of family law.

This was not the expected outcome. The Amicus, a friend of the court appointed to defend polygamy, presented strong arguments for ending the criminalization of polygamy on the basis of freedom of religion and freedom of choice in intimate relationships. The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children,

which I chair, intervened to ensure the court considered evidence about the impacts for children as well as the definition of marriage.

Women told the court about being forced to leave school against their wishes at grade 6 or 7 to become third or fourth wives of much older religious leaders, having multiple children in their teens and enduring abuse without a chance to escape for fear of what would happen to their children. In health classes, supported by tax dollars, religious instructors had told these women that their eternal salvation depended on their compliance with these practices.



Warren Jeffs, an American polygamist leader, is now in jail for the sexual exploitation of minors.

Young men told the court how they were punished, assigned dangerous work at early ages and forced out of the community if they showed any challenge to the religious leaders. The most compelling story came together at the end of the hearing. Putting together information from various sources, evidence was presented to show that young Canadian girls, including two twelve-year-olds, were taken across the U.S. border, turned over to religious leaders in Colorado and then transported to Texas where they were given to Warren Jeffs, who was later convicted and jailed

See Ruling on page 2

News

Crisis *continued*

Why don't they move somewhere else, where there is adequate housing and infrastructure? The answer is three-fold.

First, our colonialist system is ultimately responsible for the state of affairs today. First Nations communities live where they do because we put them there. We restricted each community to a tiny sliver of its traditional land, cut off from the resources around them, with many of their rights as Aboriginal people tied to the reserves upon which they live. In addition to the loss of certain rights as status Indians, Aboriginal people who move to the city (as they have in large number, particularly in Western Canada) can face marginalization and poverty without the resources of a family network and familiar culture which they have on the reserves.

While natural resources around their reserves are exploited by private companies, First Nations communities often struggle to make adequate deals that will secure at least some employment for their people. Economic development is a bleak prospect for many reserves dealing with distance, difficult transportation, inadequate infrastructure and culturally inappropriate education. For northern communities especially, the cost of living is very high as everything needs to be flown in or trucked in over ice roads. This is one reason for inadequate housing as it makes the cost of building a home very high and makes it more likely that inadequate materials will be used.

Second, the amount of government support that First Nations communities receive is less than the support other Canadians receive. While the Prime Minister made a big deal of \$90 million for Attawapiskat over the last five years, he neglected to mention that that \$90 million needed to cover every government service provided to Attawapiskat. \$50,000 per man, woman and child over five years is not a lot of money to provide education, health care, housing, roads, safe

drinking water and social services. Lorraine Land calculates that every Torontonians receives roughly \$24,000 every year in government spending. Yet Stephen Harper isn't out there telling Toronto he wants his money back.

The federal government provides almost all services to First Nations communities, including health, education and social services that are normally covered by the provinces. Yet while the Canadian Social Transfer, which the federal government gives the provinces to help with the costs of social services, increases by three percent a year, transfers to Aboriginal communities are capped at two percent increases per year. Because inflation and population growth account for more than two percent a year, First Nations are receiving less money from the federal government every year, even as they are falling further and further behind the standard received by the provinces.

Finally, Canadians have a tendency to blame the victim when it comes to Aboriginal crises. Instead of acknowledging our history of colonialism and many of the problems it has caused,



National Chief Shawn Atleo of the Assembly of First Nations speaks at the Crown-First Nations summit.

Because inflation and population growth account for more than two percent a year, First Nations are receiving less money from the federal government every year, even as they are falling further and further behind the standard received by the provinces.

we make insinuations of corruption and mismanagement, we trade in stereotypes of greedy but lazy Indians, and we make racist inferences about the ability of First Nations to govern themselves. Attawapiskat has been a perfect example of this. After delaying support and acknowledgement to the community, the government responded to the crisis with a third-party manager and allegations of Attawapiskat being a black hole for government money.

Reconciliation

It is not acceptable that our First Nations communities live in poverty, squalor and oblivion while we live in comfort and luxury on the land that we agreed to share. We need a reset on the relationship between our communities. We must do more than pay lip-service to the rights of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

The Crown-First Nations summit held on Jan. 24 may have been a start. But the federal government needs to stop blaming the victim and needs to provide accountability for the promises we have made to Canada's First Nations.

Chandra Pasma is an Ottawa-based policy analyst.

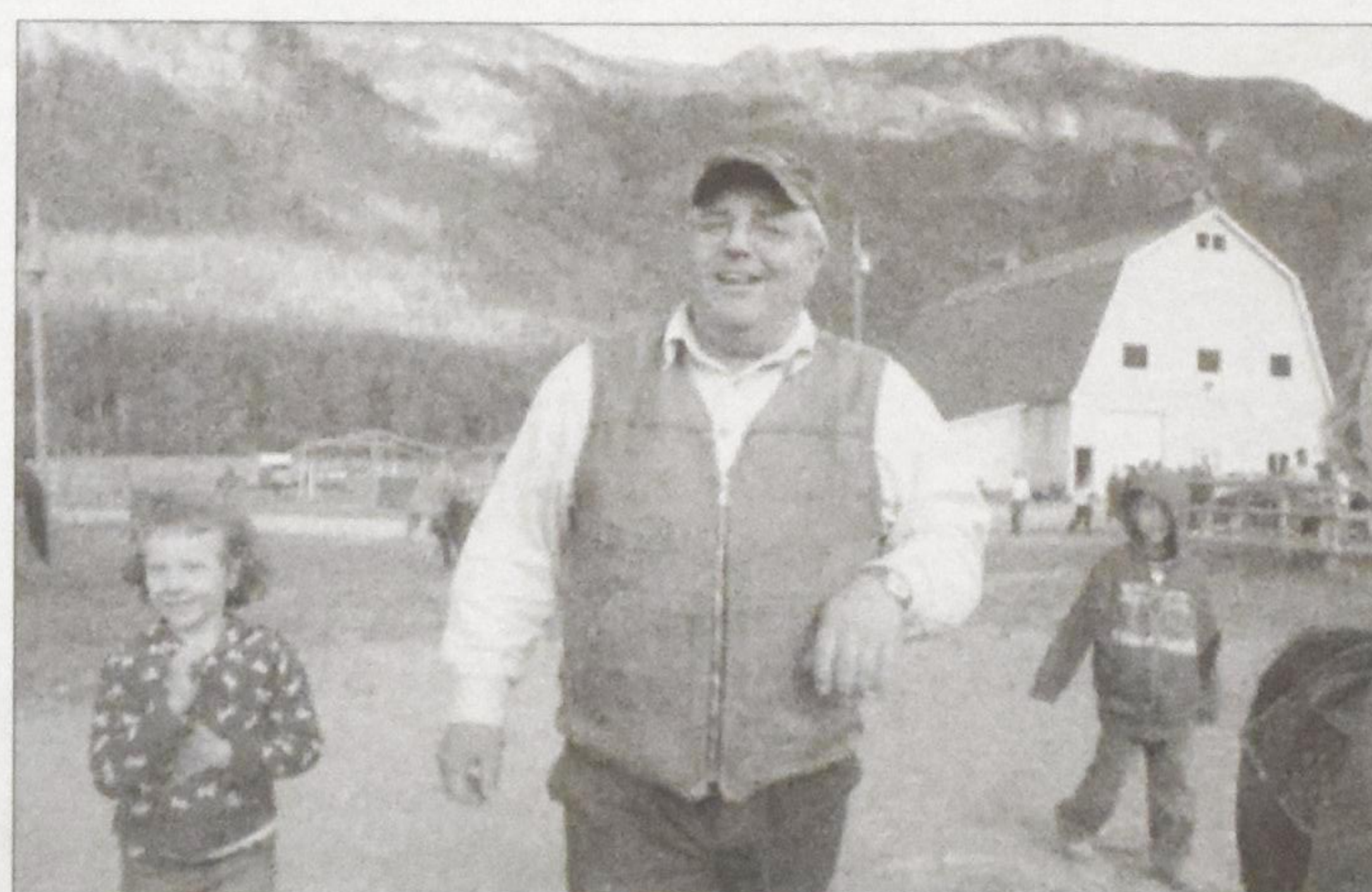
**Ruling** *continued*

for sexual exploitation of minors. This is child-trafficking. At one stage the B.C. government was informed about the presence of Canadian girls among the children at the Texas ranch of Warren Jeffs, but nothing was done about it initially. Inadequate record-keeping on children in closed, polygamous communities and lack of political will hamper child protection. The RCMP announced a new investigation at the close of the hearing, but to date no charges have been filed.

There were some women who testified that they made free choices and enjoyed the benefits of polygamous marriages. By the end of the hearing, however, the evidence about harm to women and children was well-established, including forced early marriage, sexual exploitation of adolescent girls, child labour, failure to educate adolescents enough to live independently and trafficking children across the border. Even the Amicus acknowledged in his closing statement that the current practice of polygamous communities in B.C. included unacceptable violations of the rights of children and women.

An appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was expected, but the deadline for appeal has now passed without notice.

By the end of the hearing ... the evidence about harm to women and children was well-established, including forced early marriage, sexual exploitation of adolescent girls, child labour, failure to educate adolescents enough to live independently and trafficking children across the border.



Winston Blackmore, the leader of the polygamous community in Bountiful, B.C., and some of his children.

So the ruling stands – at least for now and at least in B.C.

An important precedent

The ruling sets an important precedent in Canadian law, reinforcing the duty of the state to take positive measures to prevent harm, especially for young people. When community or religious practices such as those practiced within polygamous communities fail to protect the fundamental rights of children, the state has a duty to act. This may include prohibiting such harmful practices if necessary.

The use of harm as a central principle for adjudicating competing rights claims creates challenges of definition and proof. What kind and level of risk of harm justifies state action? What kind of state action is warranted? Future cases will undoubtedly come back to these questions.

Harm to the institution of monogamous marriage, the other harm cited in the ruling, raises even more questions. The

ruling leaves open a door for plural, intimate relationships that are not sanctioned by a state or religious ceremony. This provision was included in response to representation by persons in polyamorous relationships between two men and one woman or two women and one man that are formed by mutual free choice and are not formalized through marriage. Criminal prosecution of such relationships is hard to justify by appeal to the harm principle. Although the ruling upholds the value of monogamous marriage as a social institution, it does not provide clarity for legal distinctions between the different kinds of intimate relationships from non-formal to common-law to marriage. That went beyond his mandate, said Judge Bauman. The focus on preventing harm may foster a more helpful discourse about dependencies and interdependencies in various relationships than about the sexual aspects of such relationships, as a sound basis for public policy and laws.

In the meantime, it is time for the RCMP and the B.C. government to get serious about protecting the rights of children affected by polygamous communities in B.C. Positive measures will include educational reform and outreach services for young people, as well as prosecuting community leaders responsible for trafficking young girls across the border for sexual exploitation by religious leaders in the U.S. This case demonstrates a systemic failure to protect the rights of children that should be of concern to every resident of B.C. and Canada. It is a stark case, but it is not an isolated case. Protecting the rights of all children deserves more attention across Canada.

Kathy Vandergrift, a public policy analyst, focused her Master's Thesis in Public Ethics on a comparison of different ethical foundations for children's rights. She lives in Ottawa.



Columns

Christ @ Culture



Lloyd Rang

Pick-up sticks



By [courage] I don't mean the lack of fear which some people have, which enables them to do very dangerous or frightening things because they have no idea what it is to be afraid. I mean a courage which overcomes real fear, while actually experiencing it. — Peter Hitchens

The elderly drive slowly and cautiously. They tend to do everything that way. For example, last week I was trapped behind an elderly woman whose slow, methodical trip down the cereal aisle reminded me of someone defusing a bomb – like the shelves were filled with brightly coloured boxes of spring-loaded explosives.

When I was younger, that kind of caution confused me. I figured if I was old, I'd want to make every second count. I wouldn't pause in the bank for chit chat. I'd drive fast and take chances. It made no sense to me that the elderly – who have relatively little time left – would be so hesitant, tentative and fearful.

But as I've gotten older myself, I've realized that life is a lot like a stock portfolio: the more years you have invested in the world, the more risk-averse you become. And, the longer you live, the more risks you see around you.

For example: when you're a kid, a stick on the ground can be many things – a magical sword, a marshmallow-roaster, a beehive poker. When you're older, a stick on the ground is nothing but a tripping hazard and a ticket to a broken hip. As you age, experience tells you the world is a dangerous place. It's nothing but sticks and stones.

Like when a classmate dies in an accident. That sticks. Or when a close friend dies of cancer. That sticks. And all our other, smaller fears – whether it's a fear of spiders, commitment or circus clowns – which just get bigger and burrow deeper into our psyches



A vacationer rappels into Belize's famous "Black Hole Drop," a terrifying prospect for anyone afraid of heights.

and take up permanent residence there.

Take my fear of heights, for example. In the summers when I was in university, I used to work at Dofasco. I'd hang five stories up above vats of bubbling steel with no safety harness. And in my 20s, I once free-climbed the 100m walls of Algonquin's Barron Canyon on a whim. But back then, with fewer years invested in the planet, I was far more likely to take risks.

These days, heights make me nervous. Which is why, during a vacation in Belize, just as we were about to rappel into a 300 foot-deep hole, I almost chickened out. And, yet, a few minutes later I was standing on the canyon floor with a hearty yell and a clean pair of underwear to my credit. Not only because I wanted to conquer my own fears, but because I wanted to help conquer my son's too. And not his fear of heights – because, truthfully, they don't bug him very much. In fact, he's a really brave kid. But there are a few things that scare him. He's a kid, after all – and all kids are afraid of something. In the past, when I've tried to help him with his fears, he's said: "Well, yeah, dad, that's easy for you to say: you're not afraid of ANYTHING."

Facing fear

I get it. When you're seven years old, your dad is like Chuck Norris. Your dad doesn't fear the world – the world fears your dad. And for generations, dads have let their kids believe they were tough, strong and fearless. But for me and my son, that wasn't going to work. If I was going to help him, he needed to be able to relate to me.

And that's why, before we went rappelling into Belize's famed "Black Hole Drop," I made sure I told him I was scared of heights. Really scared. And I let him see me being scared, and go through with the jump anyway. I'd like to say it was all part of a carefully crafted plan. But the truth is, it was a spur-of-the moment lesson that paid off.

A few days ago, when Cameron was feeling anxious, I reminded him of how scared I'd been, during that climb. And I said to him: "Son, everyone is afraid of something. Courage isn't about getting over your fear – it's about getting through it." And he gave me a big hug. And darn it all, if he didn't get through that anxious moment like a trooper.

I was very proud of him, because now he gets to think of himself as the *brave* kid. The *courageous* kid. And yet he couldn't have become that kid if he hadn't first been the *scared* kid.

It's a lesson I hope to remember. Because, letting go – in faith – is the greatest act of bravery there is. I hope it comes to mind when I'm a senior. Especially on the days when I'm feeling threatened by the other cars on the highway, fretting about the musical tastes of young people or feeling intimidated by a box of CoCo Puffs.

I'm under no illusions. I already know I'm going to get more fearful as I get older. A growing list of anxieties is as inevitable as crows' feet, grey hair and wanting kids to stay off your lawn. But letting those fears define you – that's a choice. And not just for the elderly but for all of us, in big ways and small, every day.

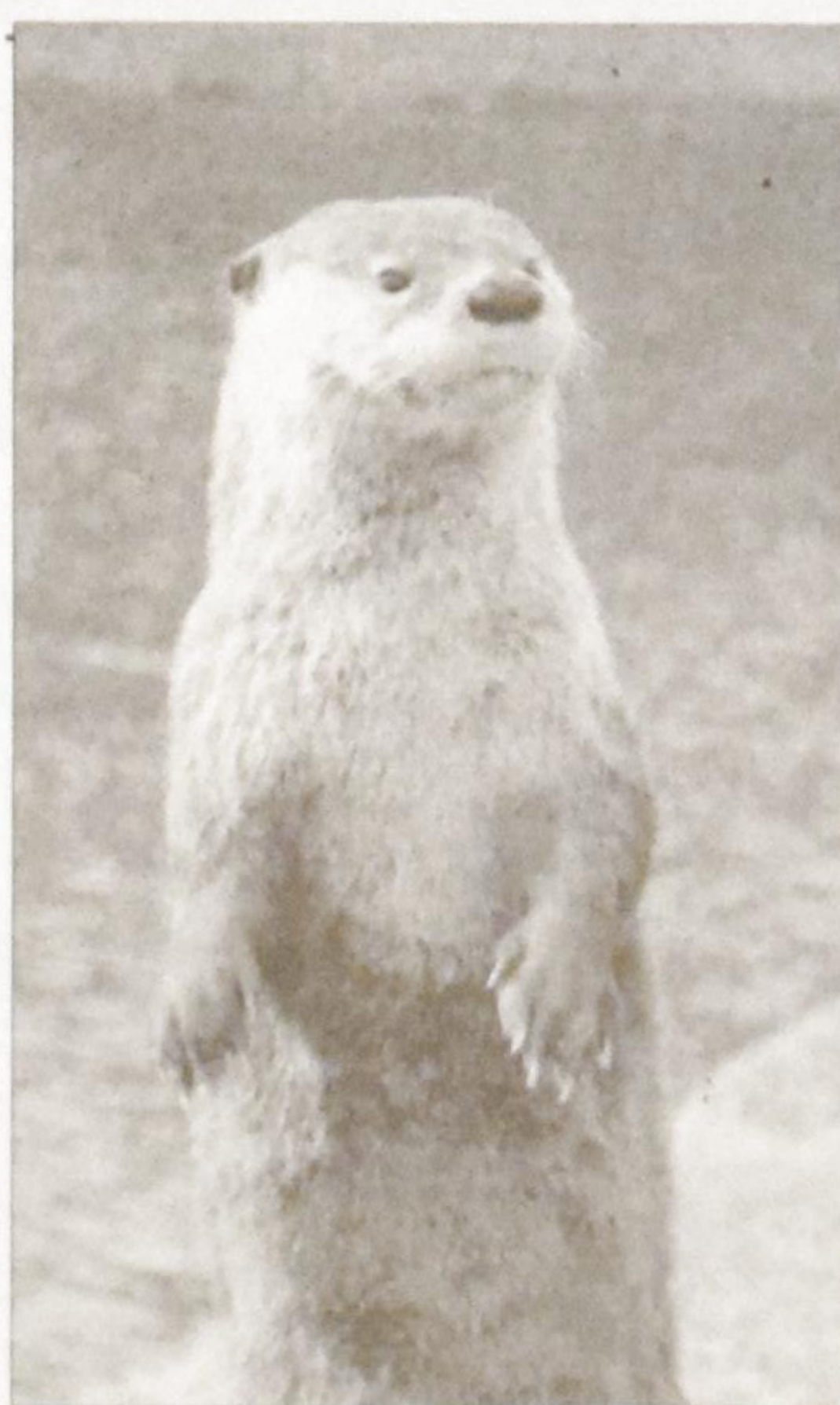
Because you can choose to see the object on the path as a tripping hazard. Or you can choose to be happy that you found a new walking stick, pick it up, and make it your own.

Lloyd Rang (Lloyd.rang@rogers.com) lives in Bowmanville, Ontario.

Scared of something? There's a word for that.

The following are actual words that are used in medicine and psychology to describe people's fears. All appear in clinical reference books or the Oxford English Dictionary, and are considered legitimate English words.

- Alektorophobia – fear of chickens
- Anemophobia – fear of air
- Arachibutyrophobia – fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth
- Atomophobia – fear of atomic explosions
- Auroraphobia – fear of the northern lights
- Dikephobia – fear of justice
- Doraphobia – fear of animal skins
- Ecclesiophobia – fear of church
- Euphobia – fear of hearing good news
- Kakorrhaphiophobia – fear of defeat
- Kathisophobia – fear of sitting down
- Lilapsophobia – fear of hurricanes and tornadoes
- Liticaphobia – fear of lawsuits
- Mycophobia – fear of mushrooms
- Myrmecophobia – fear of ants
- Ostraconophobia – fear of shellfish
- Papaphobia – fear of the Pope
- Paraskavedekatriaphobia – fear of Friday the 13th
- Philemaphobia – fear of kissing
- Triskadekaphobia – fear of the number 13



Afraid of otters? You may suffer from lutraphobia.

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Editorials

What's the Bible got to do with it?



Mike Wagenman

Walk into many North American churches today and what will you observe? The chances are quite good that you'll experience what I have: a kickin' worship band belting out a U2 chart-topper, worshippers down on the floor on all fours barking like dogs in charismatic ecstasy, or preachers extolling the redemptive power of newborn babies. It seems that the typical recipe for success in many North American churches today lies in entertaining experiences orchestrated by innovative preachers with magnetic personalities and cool ideas.

You may also hear a motivating text lifted from the Bible. But more often than not, if you listen closely, you'll notice that the sermon/message/reflection isn't really rooted in the Christian Scriptures and the historic meditation of the church on them. Instead, these biblical texts are used like booster rockets to get the "talk" off the ground, airborne, and up to a speed sufficient to capture the attention of an audience prone to distraction by incessantly checking their smartphones. Once underway, once attention has been grabbed, the real heart of the message becomes evident: a recent book the preacher read a few pages of, a tweet the preacher found thought-provoking, an ideological or socio-political agenda the preacher believes you should adopt along with him/her, or a clever idea that dawned on the preacher between coffee dates with church and community members that will "revolutionize your life this week."

The church's central ministry is renewing the covenantal bond God has established with his people through his Word. This single thing has been the heart of Christian worship for two millennia. It's what the Church has fought, bled, and been reformed over. Today, God's Word is dispensable, along with everything else in our consumer society. Practically-speaking, we think there are many more motivational and transformational gimmicks up the preacher's sleeve than some outdated words which sound funny to our sophisticatedly hip ears.

The Church in the West is in crisis. But you don't need me to tell you that. What the crisis is, in what it consists, where its heart and roots lie – those are the questions for which nobody has a clear answer. Proposals run the entire spectrum: lack of openness to homosexuality, openness to homosexual members, discomfort with evolution, discomfort with "the plain literal teaching" of Genesis 1, stubborn ethnic traditions, increased ethnic diversity, incompetent leadership, abusive leadership, leadership in general, overly rigid administrative leadership structures, overly flexible administrative leadership structures, denominations, non-denominational churches, hymns, drums,

hymnals, powerpoint, lack of discipleship ministries, nearly-abusive discipleship expectations and the list goes on endlessly. Where are the Reformers of today, shining a spotlight on the vacuum that exists at the centre of our life before God?

A crisis of identity

Look around planet Earth to where the Church is thriving (and it is indeed thriving in most of the world today!) and you will come to the general impression that our crisis today in the North American Church is a crisis of identity. If there is any consensus about this at present, it tends to be in this area: we don't know *who* we are. Or, to switch the metaphor and pick up on the question N. T. Wright adds to Walsh and Middleton's worldview questions, we don't know *when* we are living.

One area in which this crisis in the Church may be most noticeable is in our understanding of and practice around Scripture in corporate worship. In the Reformational tradition, Scripture is the heart of the Church's worship – God's Word that calls us, that convicts us, that cleanses us and that commissions us to go back out into the world equipped to be God's gracious ambassadors. But today, the centrepiece of our worship is rather a host of other entertaining distractions which smother and marginalize Scripture.



Has worship become more about spectacle than Scripture?

Is it because we have mistaken the "already" and the "not yet"? Do we believe that we have "arrived" and that worship is a kind of exciting accoutrement for life? – nice, possibly fun, but not all that essential. Have we made a mistake in telling what time it is in God's "drama of salvation" so that we think of Scripture as that which gets us saved but then the rest of the godly life proceeds more by helpful tips and stimulating ideas rather than the life-giving narrative of God's mighty acts in history?

There was a time when Scripture wasn't necessary for God's people. But we aren't living in that time period any longer. Speaking of how God's Word functions in the life of the believer after the Fall, Abraham Kuyper said that *"When the sun shines in your house, bright and clear, you turn off the electric light, but when the sun disappears, below the horizon, you feel the... need of artificial light, and the artificial light is kindled in every dwelling. Now this is the case... when there are no mists to hide the majesty of the divine light from our eyes, what need is there then for a lamp unto the feet, or a light upon the path? But when history, experience and consciousness all unite in stating the fact that the pure and full light of Heaven has disappeared, and that we are groping about in the dark, then, a different, or if you will, an artificial light must be kindled for us; – and such a light God has kindled for us in His Holy Word"* (Calvinism, 67-68).

How would our Christian worship today look if we truly believed that apart from being regularly addressed by God's Word we are in fact "groping about in the dark" of our separation from God? What would our Christian lives look like if we believed this in our heart of hearts? What would we do with the Rockettes on Sunday morning if we hungered and thirsted after God's living Word above all the other distractions of our hyperlinked lives and churches?

Mike Wagenman is the Director of the Kuyper Centre for Emerging Scholars (kuypercentre.ca) at the University of Western Ontario.

Fitness and the gym



Michael Buma

In Deuteronomy 32:15 we're told that "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Saviour." My study Bible tells me that Jeshurun means "the upright one" and refers to the Israelites as a people, so what we're seeing in this passage is clearly a personification and a metaphor. But the suggestion that physical laziness relates directly to spiritual laziness is borne out elsewhere in the Bible, such as in Corinthians 9 where Paul uses metaphors drawn from boxing and running to communicate the importance of discipline in the Christian life. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and I think we'd all agree that it's important to treat them well and keep them in good shape.

Even if there wasn't spiritual value to be had from physical fitness, the case for working out is an absolute slam-dunk (bad pun intended). The mental and physical benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating have been irrefutably established by study after study. A good friend of mine who graduated from Calvin seminary not long ago once remarked that his theological education hadn't paid much attention to the fact that physical and spiritual wellbeing are intimately connected. Wouldn't it be great if aspiring pastors took a course on the importance of exercise and nutrition in the Christian life? In my own experience, one of the best ways to cope with difficult situations and relieve stress is to go play sports.

Unfortunately physical fitness isn't easy. When I look back on my own efforts to stay in shape over the years, several major obstacles present themselves. First, aside from playing team sports – which I do a lot of – I've never been very motivated when it comes to repetitive exercise and training. For some reason running becomes infinitely more enjoyable when there's a ball to chase after and a goal to kick it towards. I find jogging boring, and it takes me too long to get the so-called "runner's high" release of endorphins. Ditto the weight room, riding the stationary bike and swimming laps. Nonetheless, I used to force myself to do all these things from time to time because I knew they were good for me.

The next problem is time. Even when I managed to get motivated and drag myself to the gym, I found that I'd need to spend at least an hour to get a moderate workout of half an hour cardio and half an hour free weights. Factor in travel and shower times and we're talking an hour and a half at the very least, and most days I simply don't have that kind of time to spend on staying in shape.

The biggest problem

These are considerable impediments, but in the end I think the biggest thing keeping me away from the gym is the gym itself. Misha Glouberman and Sheila Heti's description of modern fitness centres in *The Chairs Are Where the People Go* rings very true to my experience:

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EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Interim Editor: Michael Buma editor@christiancourier.ca
 Features Editor: Cathy Smith cathy@christiancourier.ca
 Church Page Editor: Marian Van Til marianvantil@roadrunner.com
 Review Editor: Nick Schuurman reviews@christiancourier.ca
 Contributing Editor: Bert Witvoet bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca
 Contributing Editor: Angela Reitsma Bick angela@christian.ca
 Admin/Bus. ads/Web: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer ads@christiancourier.ca
 Circulation/Fam. ads: Rose der Nederlanden rose@christiancourier.ca

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Letters

Pray and give

Brian Bork's good exposition of the monastic life style ("In the desert: fleeing" CC Jan. 9) reminded me of a story my friend and colleague George Vandervelde once told me. George was attending a high-level ecumenical conference in Europe. A monk from Mount Athos was there representing the Greek Orthodox Church. (Mount Athos is the remote peninsula in Northern Greece where the most promising, intelligent monks of the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches live, study and worship in monastery seclusion.)

"Good to see you here," said George during a coffee break to the Mount Athos monk. "But why do you normally live in remote seclusion rather than be busy engaging the societal problems of the world?"

The gist of the monk's answer was this: "We know a woman is being raped many kilometres far away in Athens at 3 a.m. We

are intently praying for her."

I do not usually get up in the middle of the night to pray God's angels attend the women being abused in Toronto at those hours. Shame on me. But I am grateful to belong to the brand of faith which follows Jesus, as Syd Hielema put it "with heart (prayer), mind (creed) and hand" ("A Reason to Exist" CC Jan. 23) and which Seth Veenstra's good review the Citizens for Public Justice book, *Living Justice*, articulates (CC Jan. 23).

Maybe we should pray hard to God at bedtime on our knees for the unknown women and children who will be violated during our sleep, and open our wallets and purses wider to support the CPJ and Christian Reformed World Relief Committee hands at work for our Lord to alleviate the suffering of the weak.

Calvin Seerveld
Toronto, Ont.

Correction

The second paragraph of T. Posthumus' letter in the Jan. 23 issue should have been:

The estimated cost to society of a problem gambler ranges from \$13,000 to \$20,000

per year, taking into account related factors such as theft, incarceration, counselling and recidification....

Christian Courier regrets the error.

Fitness and the gym *continued*

"the gym is like the meeting point of all these different things that are emblematic of our time. It looks like a shopping mall and the factory, and it's where our crazy desire to exert ourselves and work hard meets our crazy desire to be young forever, along with our crazy confusion about our appetites, and our imagining that we can subject everything to rational,



Many modern gyms are like a cross between the mall and the factory.

super-mechanistic processes. Fifty years from now, if you wanted to pick something that encapsulates the old days of the early twenty-first century, you'd show the gym."

I used to work out in the Recreation Centre at the university where I did my graduate degrees and currently teach. It's a new state-of-the-art facility, one of the best of its kind in Canada. And it really does feel like a cross between a factory and a shopping mall. The grinding and clanking of the weight machines sounds like some kind of assembly line, and the phalanxes of treadmills and elliptical machines look like a turbine system designed to power the whole industrial mess. There are TVs and mirrors everywhere, which reminds me of the mall, and the people working out are very much there to be seen. From the tiny girls on the treadmills wearing their even tinier Lululemon workout gear to the top-heavy-looking guys in sleeveless moisture wicking t-shirts who hover around the free weights with their ipods and protein shakes, the people in the gym look like they've sprung from the pages of a fitness magazine. I wear knee-length athletic shorts and old cotton t-shirts I've owned since high school, and feel very out of place. Another way of saying all this is that many people in the gym seem mainly concerned with cosmetic fitness, or as Angie Abdou calls it in her novel *The Bone Cage*, the "Wasaga Beach Workout. Biceps and pecs, baby."

In an age of obesity epidemic, it seems absolutely perverse to steer people away from the gym. But I think I've discovered a better way. In my next editorial, I'll outline a fitness philosophy and regime that I've been following – and actually enjoying – for the last eight months. Not all workout programs are created equal, and I think I've found one that is both functionally and morally superior to the culture of industrialized, superficial fitness that flourishes at the gym. But more on that next time.

Michael Buma teaches in the English and Kinesiology departments at the University of Western Ontario, and is interim editor of the Christian Courier. He doesn't want to end up like Jeshurun.

What's YOUR story?

Christian Courier Short Story Contest!

I: Send in your original short fiction (1000 to 3000 words) on any theme by May 1, 2012. First prize receives \$100 and publication in a summer issue of *Christian Courier*. Please note that this contest is for *short stories*, not essays or articles. Second prize receives a year's subscription. All stories must be submitted electronically to cathy@christiancourier.ca. Entries over the word limit will not be considered.

II: Our readers 8 to 14 years of age can participate in the category for youth. There will be two divisions: junior (Grades 3-5) and Intermediate (Grades 6-8). Send your short stories (500 - 1000 words) to cathy@christiancourier.ca before May 1, 2012. **Entries over the word limit will not be considered.** The first-place winner in each division will win a gift certificate to Toys'R'Us valued at \$50. All stories will be considered for publication in CC.

Synod and the Belhar

Regarding "CRC: Synodical reports on the Belhar, creation care and an officebearers covenant now available" (CC Dec. 26, 2011), a study committee simply sends a report to Synod where it will automatically be on the floor? The process I have to use is as follows:

- 1) Convince my Consistory/Council I have a case (takes three months).
- 2) Consistory/Council has to overture Classis (takes almost a year).
- 3) Classis has to overture Synod (takes about a year).

My chances of succeeding if my view is against including the Belhar? Zero.

Here's a possible solution: the study report goes to every Council and Consistory for approval or rejection. Then it goes to every Classis for the same reason. If the recommendation that the CRC adopt the Belhar survives those hurdles, God must be at work. If the recommendation fails, God is still at work. We win both ways.

Why do we insist on bringing these (to me) divisive issues to the highest ecclesiastical level first? The church has bigger issues to deal with. As the church is looking at its governance anyway, let's have a look at how we deal with these issues as well.

Harry Boessenkool
Surrey, B.C.

No excuse for bad language

I am an avid reader of CC and I have also promoted CC in our church and family. A very good paper. I wish you all God's blessing as you continue to publish CC. But I was shocked to read the article "Thoughts about parenting, or, the unlikely success of a transgressive children's book" (CC Jan. 9) by interim editor Michael Buma, which used the f-word 15 times. My suggestion is to read Ephesians 5 and take notice what Paul says in verse 4. As a teacher and writer you have a great responsibility to let your light shine. Don't promote the attitude of "I can't fight them, so I might as well join them." May God bless you brother.

W. Harbers
Brinston, Ont.

Regarding "Thoughts about parenting, or, the unlikely success of a transgressive children's book" (CC Jan. 9), while your "thoughts" were generally interesting I find the prominent presentation of the book you described very objectionable. You mentioned that you didn't want to address the issue of language but then you proceeded to use the full title of the book, which includes the f-word, a dozen or more times along with displaying the book's cover. Further you suggest that one shouldn't be bothered about the use of the f-word as that is how people talk these days.

The fact that coarse language has lots its shock value is more lamentable than acceptable and your approach to it sends entirely the wrong message, especially to our children. Surely you could have used a better reference source for your thoughts about parenting.

Oscar DeBoer
Chatham, Ont.

Christian Courier

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News

Canadian and American rabbis duel over Jesus

Marian Van Til, with files from the *National Post*, *Huffington Post*
TORONTO — Two prominent orthodox rabbis — one from Canada, one from the U.S. — have entered a “holy war” over whether Jesus should have any place in Judaism.

A new book, *Kosher Jesus*, was published early this month by well-known American rabbi Shmuley Boteach. But Rabbi Immanuel Schochet of Toronto is adamant that the book is “heretical,” the *National Post* has reported. Schochet banned the book for his congregation members. “It is forbidden for anyone to buy or read this book, or give its author a platform in any way shape or form to discuss this topic,” he said.

The argument centres on Jesus’ Jewish roots. Boteach says the “the Jewishness of Jesus” should lead Jews today to “rediscover” and even rejoice in the ways the Old Testament shaped Jesus. “It’s time these universal Jewish ideas that have so influenced the world be traced back to their original source,” Boteach wrote while defending *Kosher Jesus*. “It’s time that the Jewishness of Jesus be rediscovered by Christians.”



‘Tremendous risk’ to Jews

But Schochet has a very different view. He is vehemently opposed to Christians evangelizing Jews and often writes about what he sees as the gulf between Christianity and Judaism. In an online article on *The Algemeiner* website he wrote, “While it is not normally my style to write letters

of condemnation, having read the book I feel it poses a tremendous risk to the Jewish community. Schochet is the rabbi at Congregation Beth Joseph in Toronto and an emeritus professor of philosophy and religion at Humber College. He was born in Switzerland and immigrated to Canada in 1951.



Wrote Schochet, “I have never read a book, let alone one authored by a purported frum [religious] Jew, that does more to enhance the evangelical missionary message and agenda than the aforementioned book.

The grossly distorted message of the book violates basic premises of original and authentic Jewish tradition, thus unavoidably must be rejected for being heretical. It is my sincerest hope that the author recognizes the error of his ways and looks to make amends by retracting the book.”

Boteach countered Schochet, also online, at *The Huffington Post* website, where he presented a lengthy critique of Schochet’s criticism. While describing Immanuel Schochet as “someone whose writings and lectures I have long admired,” Boteach said, “I must retain the right to defend myself against the appalling and libelous charge of heresy.” He added, “I never expected my critics to compromise their own values in going after the book.”

Boteach asserted that his book “goes back to the original Gospel source materials to uncover the real story of Jesus,” as he was — “prior to later Christian editors significantly modifying the story to accommodate the Romans.”

‘Father’ and ‘Son’ removed from Bible translations for Muslims

ORLANDO, FL. (Christian Post) — A controversial decision by Wycliffe and SIL Bible translators to remove the words “Father” and “Son” from Arabic Bible versions when referring to God is stirring a debate over the theological implications of such decisions.

“Father,” “Son” and “Holy Spirit” are integral to the way God presents himself in Scripture and thus to preserving the true meaning of the Gospel; those words should never be tampered with, some ministries say. But Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) have argued that in certain cultures, keeping the literal translation creates the wrong context and does not portray the relationship between God and Jesus Christ correctly.

Controversy is swirling around their Arabic and Turkish translations of the Bible. “Father” has been replaced with “Allah” (simply God in Arabic), while “Son” becomes “Messiah.”

Biblical Missiology, a consortium of mission groups based in Boulder, Colorado, has started a petition on **Change.com**, which they hope will convince Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL to reconsider their decision.

According to Yahoo News, representatives of the organizations have already sat down with leaders from the Bible translating agencies in question, but have failed to reach an agreement.

One example of the change concerns Matthew 28:19, which instead of “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” becomes “Cleanse them by water in the name of Allah, his Messiah and his Holy Spirit.”

The reason for the modification, said both Wycliffe and SIL in similar press statements, was so that Muslim readers of the Bible are not confused into thinking that the relationship between God and Jesus is a physical father-and-son one, where God is the biological father of Jesus.

“We, along with all other Wycliffe organizations worldwide, strongly affirm the eternal deity of Jesus Christ and require that it be preserved in all translations. Scripture

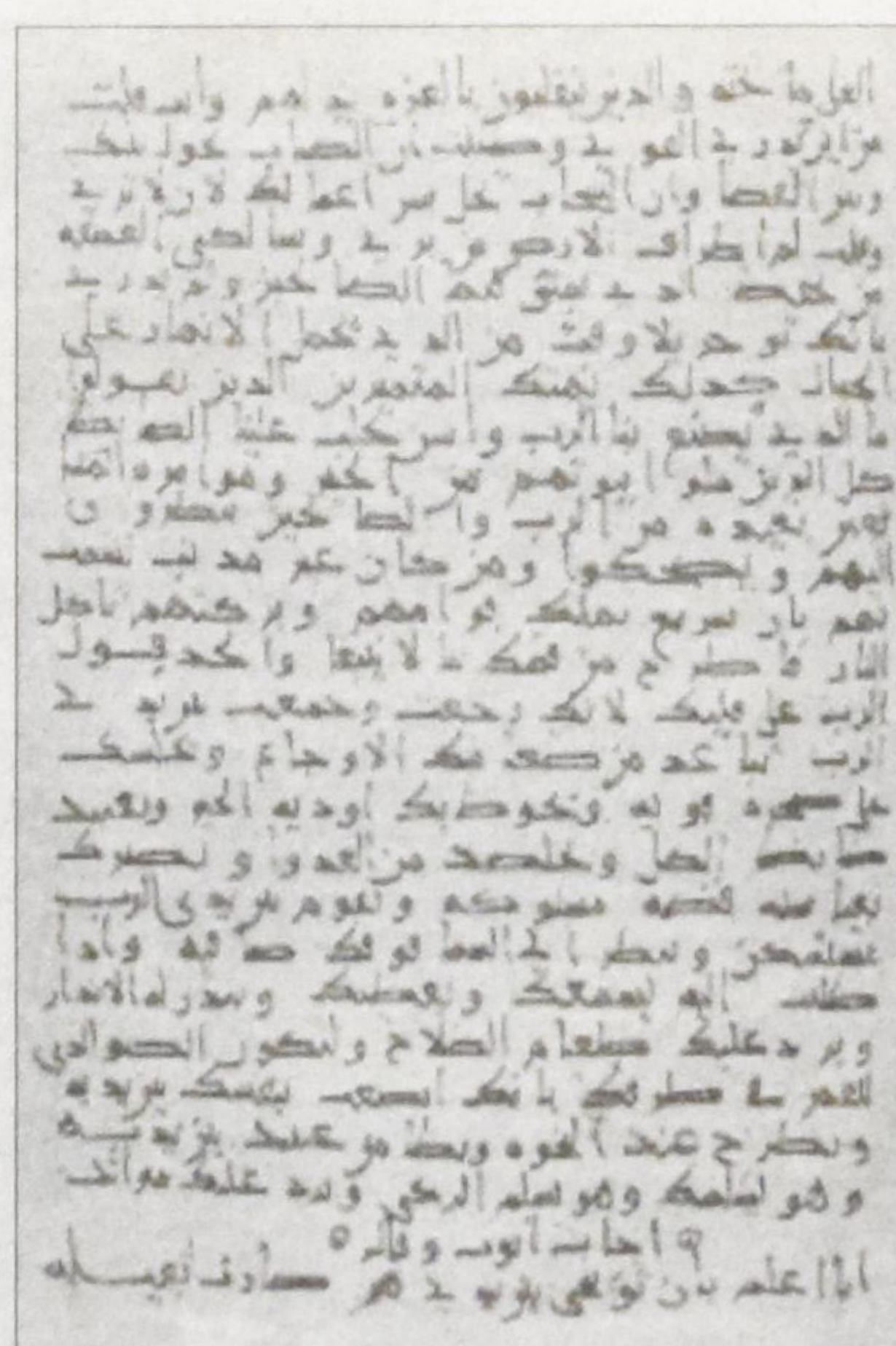
translations should promote understanding of the term ‘Son of God’ in all its richness, including his filial relationship with God the Father, while avoiding any possible implication of sexual activity by the Father,” Wycliffe’s Canadian branch explained in a statement.

Anthropology, not theology

However, a number of experts in Christian-Muslim relations are saying that such a change was unnecessary. “Rev. Bassam Madany, long-time Arabic minister for the Christian Reformed Church’s Back to God Hour was one of those experts. Said Madany, “This is a Western imperialistic attempt that’s inspired by cultural anthropology, and not by biblical theology.” Madany now works with Middle East Resources, an organization dedicated to approaching the challenge of global Islam from a Christian and historical perspective.

Turkish church leader Rev. Fikret Böcek agreed. The Father/Son omission is a North American idea, he said, “with absolutely no respect for the sacredness of Scripture, or even of the growing Turkish church.”

Other experts are warning that regardless of cultural needs, we should be looking to preserve the Bible as is. Dr. Paul M. Elliott, founder and president of Teaching The Word Ministries, says that the most important aspect concerning translating and interpreting the Bible should be preserving the meaning of the original source. Elliott holds a doctorate in biblical exegesis and has written four books



Page from an Arabic Bible.

From chair to bench: Redeemer board chair appointed judge in Ontario court

ANCASTER, Ontario (RUC) — Enno Meijers, the chairperson of Redeemer University College’s board of governors, has been appointed by the Attorney General of Ontario to be a judge in the Ontario Court of Justice.



The appointment is a significant honour and accomplishment for Meijers. But the college says that, unfortunately, the Court’s gain is Redeemer’s loss. Because of his appointment Meijers must resign from all governance boards on which he serves, including those of Redeemer and Unity Christian High School in Barrie, Ont. The resignation was effective immediately.

Redeemer President Krygsman calls the appointment bittersweet. “The appointment speaks well of Redeemer and of the quality of candidates that serve on our board. Enno brought to his work for Redeemer a strong passion for Christian education, wise and judicious leadership and a gentle, inclusive and gracious tone to our deliberations. Clearly, the Attorney General has seen some of those gifts in Enno. We will miss his service to Redeemer.”

The appointment has also not been without some sense of loss for Justice Meijers. “I have been actively involved in multiple boards, particularly Christian school boards, for 20 years and I am having some difficulty giving up that aspect of my life for the foreseeable future. However, I view this appointment as an honour and a calling, and am excited by the many opportunities for service it will afford.”

Justice Meijers remains committed to the cause of Christian education and hopes to serve Redeemer in various *ad hoc* capacities in the future. “I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the board and have felt privileged to be part of the great Kingdom adventure that Redeemer represents,” he said.

In the meantime, President Krygsman is grateful for the time and service that Meijers has already given. “I want to thank Enno for his dedication to Redeemer and his excellent leadership of our board. We pray for God’s rich blessing and wisdom to Enno and his family as he takes up his new responsibilities.”

and hundreds of articles and booklets.

Says, Elliott, “We need to have the authentic source text — of course, that has been an issue that has been debated a lot. But translators who come to the Bible (and want to use) a proper approach must be faithful and accurate in translating it and must, to the extent that is humanly possible, not impose our theological, political or cultural agendas.”

He continued, “The issue first and foremost is that we need to recognize the issue of the Bible as a religious book — it is in fact the Word of God; it is a supernatural book. We do not have the right as human beings to do that kind of manipulation of the text. We need to be faithful and accurate in translating it from the original language. It is not legitimate to do what is in fact not a translation but an interpretation.”

As a response to Wycliffe’s and SIL’s claims that such a cultural-specific translation is necessary, Biblical Missiology produced a “fact-check” document that addresses the different contentions the Bible translation organizations have made.

“This must be clearly stated at the outset: the ‘impression’ of the reader never justifies replacing or removing ‘Father,’ ‘Son’ or ‘Son of God’ from the text of Scripture, regardless of the reader’s misunderstanding or objections. The nature of the reader’s offense has no bearing on what God actually says and means in his Word,” the document said.

News

Sarnia artist creates 'sculptural herbarium' of her lawn's invasive species

SARNIA, Ont./GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Calvin College) – Of the 82 species Mary Abma identified in her backyard and classified and pressed and mounted and preserved in wax, only one doesn't have a proper classification: Rice Cut Grass. And because it doesn't, that's her favorite. But not because of the plant. "It's because of the story," she says.

Rice Cut Grass was flourishing in anonymity in Abma's lawn in Sarnia, Ont., until a botanist identified it for her as a rare species. Abma felt honoured by the presence of the plant and vowed to make it a part of the complex art work she was creating. Then a neighbor she described as "pretty much the least environmental person ever," decided to air out his garage rug by flinging it over their shared fence. The Rice Cut Grass was destroyed before it matured, but Abma was able to preserve it anyway. "It was a mess," she says. The plant expresses one of the themes of her exhibition. "We don't really know what we're doing."

Three years of work

It took three years for Abma to create the herbarium and the other artworks that compose "In My Backyard," on exhibition at Calvin College's Center Art Gallery until Feb. 18.

The herbarium is an inventory of all of the invasive species that grew in her backyard for a year – reinvented as art. "Basically, I was into biodiversity issues," she says. "I wanted to learn about what our own individual responsibility was. I knew plants were here that shouldn't be here."

So Abma, who began her artistic career as a painter, consulted with botanists and other experts who live near her native soil. She thought that perhaps 50 non-native species lived in her organically maintained yard; eventually she and her consultants identified 82. She let the invaders grow until they had roots, flowers, stems and leaves (which is necessary for classification purposes). Then she spray painted them all the same color. "I wanted to challenged the viewer by taking away everything that was familiar about the plant," she said. Then she covered each plant with wax. "A friend of mine said, 'You didn't just attach these plants. You embalmed them,'" Abma said.

Information spanning five centuries

While she worked on the plants Abma was learning all about them. She looked up documents from the 16th through 20th centuries: recipes, medicinal references,



poetry, stories, even (in the case of a certain type of shamrock), a song. Non-native plants typically traveled to North America – and to the lot adjacent to Abma's "typical raised ranch" – along with immigrants. "People just needed a taste of home," she says. "They were comfort. Some were food. Some were medicines." Abma began to wonder if her own family might figure in the local history of some non-native species. "My ancestor was a farmer in New France. He was an apothecary and he moved plants around," she explains. "I started to wonder if he brought over any of the weeds I've been stepping over in my lawn."

While she was in the middle of creating her herbarium, Abma got a call from her mother who said, "I have an herbarium in my drawer." What she had was a school project made by a great-aunt in 1885, a

catalogue of 50 species. As Abma examined it she saw that each plant had left a photo negative of itself on the facing page. The ghostly images inspired her to create lumens (photo imprints) of the species that should be in her yard.

For help in classifying her plants, Abma reached out to Calvin College biologist Dave Warners. Warners taught Abma to identify the plants scientifically. "It's important for my work not to do a slapdash job but actually to learn," she says. She created a label for each with the plant's common name, scientific name, family, habitat and date of collection. Abma also added the GPS coordinates for each species. "I have to amuse myself as I work," she says.

Fostering creation care

The final piece to Abma's exhibition is a kind of triptych

altarpiece, a cabinet from an old printer containing soil and seeds collected from the Calvin campus in Grand Rapids, Mich. The piece was created by Warners' interim class "Exploring the Arts to Foster Creation Care."

Abma previously exhibited her herbarium in Canada at Redeemer University College, but the Calvin exhibit is her first show in the U.S.

"I'm most interested to her work because it is rooted in history and biology – it's not simply an artistic presentation of plants," said Calvin director of exhibitions and fellow Canadian Joel Zwart. "She has a strong commitment to research and classify the specimens properly, which leads to a very informed vision of how she wants to display the work and how to tell a story."

Standing in the middle of her exhibition, with the vibrant orange, green and yellow herbarium behind her on a long wall of the Center Art Gallery, Abma took stock again of the plants that are now so familiar: the Lamb's Quarter, the shamrock, the Rice Cut Grass, the wheat. "My husband is so thrilled there is wheat in our yard," she says. She ponders the lesson: "We need to learn or re-learn how to pay attention. We cannot do creation care without paying attention." ➤

Obama: Abortion can help daughters 'fulfill their dreams'

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TCI) – Abortion helps daughters "fulfill their dreams" U.S. President Barack Obama declared. He made the statement on Jan. 22, the date which marked 39 years since the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalized abortions in the United States. The Supreme Court decision affirmed that abortion is a right under the U.S. Constitution.

Obama asserted that he is "committed to protecting a woman's right to choose" an abortion and said the government "should not intrude on private family matters."

Describing it as a "historic anniversary," Obama said, "We must remember that this Supreme Court decision not only protects a woman's health and reproductive freedom, but also affirms a broader principle: that government should not intrude on private family matters." He added, "We must also continue our efforts to ensure that our daughters have the same rights, freedoms and opportunities as our sons to fulfill their dreams."



The following day, tens of thousands of pro-life campaigners marched in Washington at the March for Life which is held annually near Jan. 22 as a counterpoint to the Roe v. Wade anniversary.

Speaking at the rally, Congressman Chris Smith (Republican, New Jersey), a leading congressional pro-life advocate, noted irony in the President's remarks. He asserted, "Unhindered and unfettered by any concern over a future election, Mr. Obama will aggressively use the coercive power of the state to compel abortion conformity and complicity. The predictable consequence: more dead babies, more wounded moms."

Enforced and free contraceptives, sterilization

To add to the controversy, as part of the now-being-implemented Affordable Care Act (known popularly as "Obamacare"), there is a mandate that requires faith-based agencies and organizations to offer free contraceptive and sterilization coverage to their employees, regardless of their beliefs to the contrary.

"Under the Constitution, no president has the authority to require our cooperation with what we consider to be intrinsic evil and mortal sin," said Bishop Daniel Jenky (Diocese of Peoria, Illinois). He asserted that the mandate, which he described as "bigoted and blatant," is an attack on the First Amendment rights of Catholics. He added, "I am honestly horrified that the nation I have always loved has come to this hateful and radical step in religious intolerance." Jenky, other bishops and other religious leaders are gearing up for a court fight over the mandate. ➤

U.S.: Nearly 8 in 10 advocate significant restrictions on abortion

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. (CCO) – As the U.S. marked last month the 39th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, a new survey showed that the vast majority of Americans support significant abortion restrictions.

The poll, conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion in conjunction with the Knights of Columbus, found that 79 percent of Americans say that they would not allow abortion after the first three months of pregnancy; 51 percent would allow abortion only – at most – in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother – or would not allow it at all. The numbers have held up over time as well and are almost unchanged from two years ago.

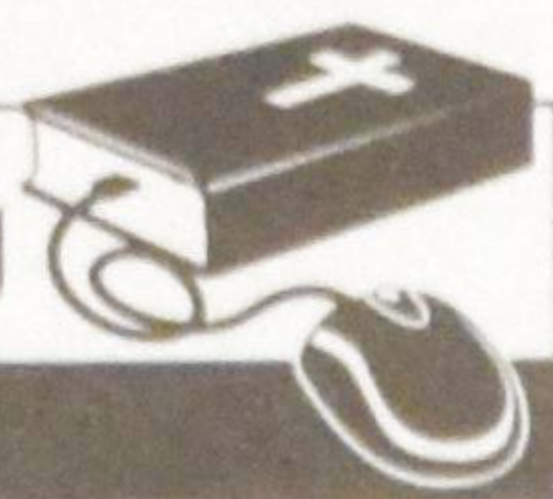
"Almost four decades after the Supreme Court's decisions in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, which resulted in the almost totally unrestricted abortion regime of today, these decisions continue to be out of step with the vast majority of Americans," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "Far from being settled law, the inadequacy of the Court's reasoning on abortion in Roe and Doe is readily apparent to most Americans. Once a survey moves beyond the labels of pro-life and pro-choice, we see a fundamental unity among Americans in favor of significant abortion restrictions."

In addition, the survey found that 84 percent of Americans believe that laws can protect both the life of the unborn and the health and well-being of women. That number was consistent with – and slightly higher than – findings two years ago when the number who said both could be protected was 81 percent. ➤

Columns

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman



Much ado about SOPA

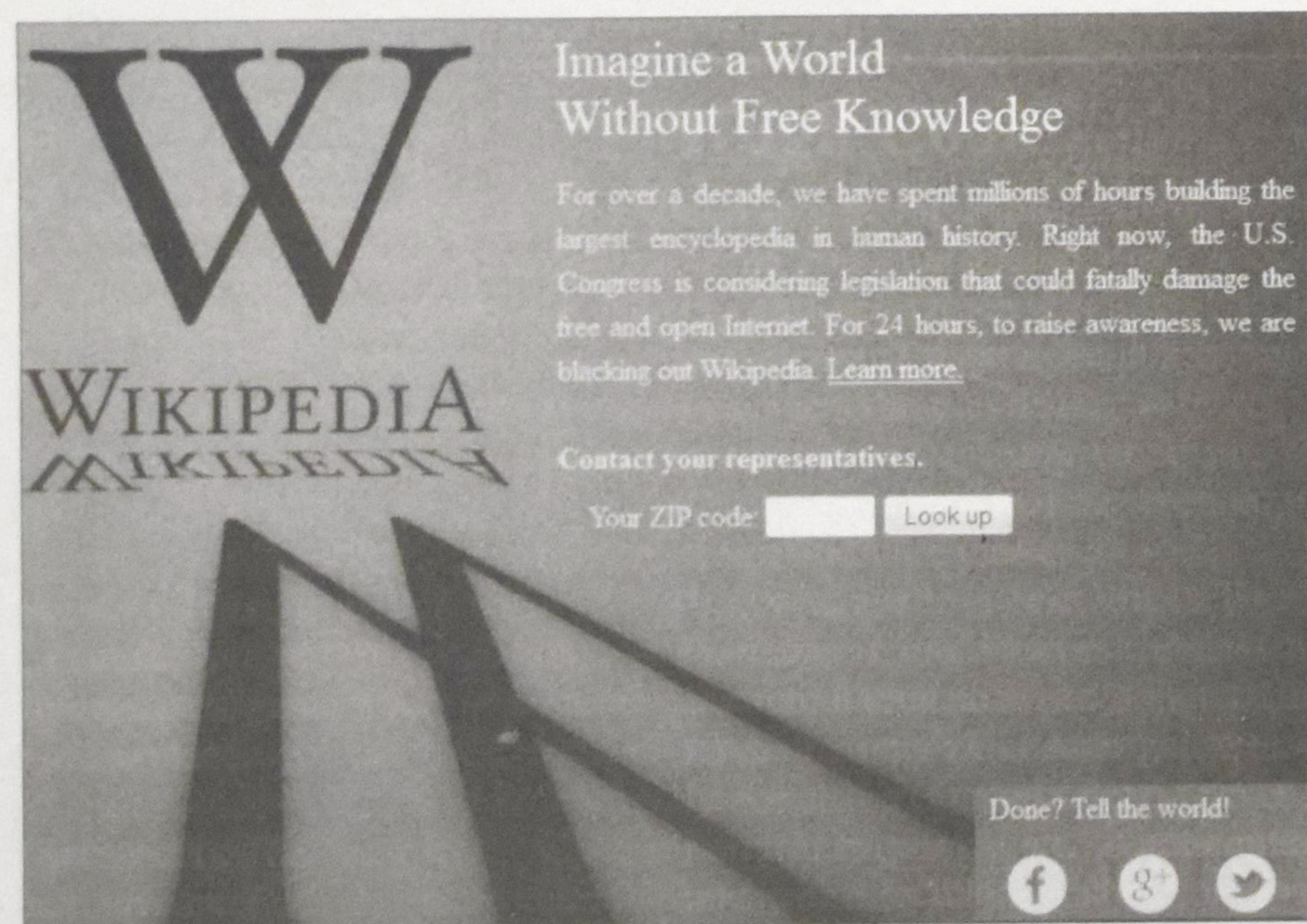


Millions of web users woke up on Jan. 18 to find that the English Wikipedia site was blacked out in protest. For one whole day, visitors to the site were greeted with a dark, foreboding screen proclaiming “Imagine a World without Free Knowledge.” Students around the world were left to search elsewhere for information or resort to searching for old printed encyclopaedias (if indeed any can still be found on school shelves). Several other high-profile sites joined in solidarity, including Google, which obscured their logo with a black patch. These sites were all protesting the proposed U.S. legislation called SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect Intellectual Property Act). In this case, the term “piracy” refers to the illegal copying of copyrighted materials on the internet.

At first glance, the notion of preventing piracy and protecting copyrights are legitimate concerns. In simplest terms copyright means the right to copy, and this is normally reserved for the owner of a creative work. These copyrights normally last for a limited amount of time, after which a work enters the public domain. Many classic writings from the early church fathers and reformers are in the public domain and can be freely downloaded from sites like the Christian Classics Ethereal Library hosted at Calvin College (www.ccel.org). Some content creators simply forgo copyright restrictions, and instead choose to freely share their creative works in the “creative commons,” producing open source software, or contributing to projects like Wikipedia.

The same computer technology that empowers the convenient sharing of public domain information also makes it more difficult to protect copyrighted material. Content such as pictures, movies, text, software and music are now represented in a digital form and can be copied and transmitted over the internet with ease. Because digital data seems so ethereal and intangible, it is sometimes difficult to recognize that it is a kind of property like any physical object. In 1999, a site called Napster enabled one of the biggest cases of copyright infringement as millions of users “shared” copyrighted music around the globe. It was eventually shut down after it was sued by various record companies.

Even though it is easy to copy and reproduce electronic content, doing so with copyrighted material is essentially stealing. It’s no different than shoplifting from a department store. The eighth commandment is quite clear: “you shall not steal.” Q & A 110 of the Heidelberg Catechism expands on this notion by stating that this law not only includes “outright theft and robbery,” but includes other “schemes” for cheating or swindling our neighbour. I have heard many arguments to justify copying digital content, including excuses like “everyone else is doing it” or “I wasn’t going to buy the product anyways.” These excuses are not convincing and miss the point that it is still stealing.



Millions of internet users were affected by Wikipedia's blackout protest against SOPA.

of all web sites having to constantly monitor all their material for any potential violations. Also, the proposed mechanism by which offending sites are shut down involves changes to the internet naming system, leading to concerns about the security and architecture of the internet. Many of the concerns are not about piracy *per se*, but about the unintended consequences of the legislation.

It appears that the protests by Wikipedia and others were successful; SOPA has been shelved for now. A balanced approach needs to consider justice for copyright holders without overreaching and encumbering legitimate web users. Any legislation will require careful consultation and discernment. The internet has been a disruptive technology and presents many challenges to the notion of copyright and intellectual property. In the meantime, this will not likely be the last we will hear about legislation for combating online piracy. ➤

Dr. Derek Schuurman is a computer science professor at Redeemer University College where the website is not blacked out, but normally available at: www.redeemer.ca.

Principalities & Powers

David Koyzis



My one companion left...



Nearly a year ago I completed two more psalms, 128 and 88, in my ongoing project to versify the biblical Psalter and to arrange their proper Genevan melodies. The tune for Psalm 128 I first heard more than 30 years ago when I was a graduate student at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies. Senior Member Calvin Seerveld had brought along to class his own versification of this psalm and had us, his students, sing it through. I was intrigued and began to follow in his footsteps, setting to verse Psalm 133 albeit to my own rather weak common metre melody. I finally returned to Psalm 128 in 2011.

The psalm itself is one of the more cheerful and optimistic, promising peace and prosperity to those who fear the LORD. Here is the third and final stanza of my versification:

From out of Zion's mountain,
the LORD bless all your ways.
May you see Salem flourish
throughout your many days.
Live long to see your children
bear children and increase!
May you see Israel prosper
in everlasting peace!

I completed this on the 11th day of March, the very day that northeast Japan was struck by a devastating earthquake and tsunami. Because the psalm's promises sounded too glib against the backdrop of tragedy, I immediately turned to Psalm 88, easily the darkest of the psalms. Verses 16-18 are reminiscent of a tsunami. My own rendition of these verses is unrhymed but can be sung to the proper Genevan tune for this psalm. Here are stanzas three and seven:

You laid me deep in the abyss,
within the dark and dreary regions.
I've borne your crushing weight of anger;
I cannot breathe beneath your waves.
My dearest friends you've taken from me,
in their own eyes you've made me hateful.

Your wrath has overtaken me;
I am cut off by all your terrors.
Your waters flowing and surrounding
have daily flooded over me.
Lover and friend have now forsaken;
my one companion left is darkness.

In my own regimen of praying through the psalms, I currently encounter Psalm 88 on the 17th day of each month at morning prayer. It always takes my breath away because it is so bereft of anything resembling hope.

Yet we should never take individual psalms out of their context. The editors of the biblical Psalter were evidently not content to give this especially gloomy one the last word. The very next Psalm, which begins evening prayer that day, begins with these words: “I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.” This should in no way be thought to mitigate the harshness of Psalm 88. It does not mean that our life's journey will be an easy one. We will occasionally – and perhaps frequently – feel alone and abandoned. Yet God's faithfulness will have the final say.

Moreover, the Psalter itself should not be abstracted from the larger biblical redemptive narrative. With the rest of scripture, the Psalms point decisively to the work of Christ, who has paid the price for our sins at the cross. As we look forward to the day of our redemption at his promised return, let us continue to sing the psalms, offering them up to the One in whom they find their ultimate fulfilment. ➤

David T. Koyzis teaches politics at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont., and will be lecturing there on Singing the Psalms on Tuesday, February 28, 2012. His psalter website is located at: genevanpsalter.redeemer.ca.

Reviews

Children's books for Black History Month

Reviewed by **Sonya Vanderveen Feddema**

Marian Anderson, born in Philadelphia in 1897, grew up in a family and church community that loved to sing. But Marian stood out from the crowd because her voice was "strong and velvety and able to climb more than twenty-four notes." News of her gift spread to neighbouring churches. Soon the ten-year-old was chosen to sing with the People's Chorus, a choir representing all the black church choirs in Philadelphia. She sang with such feeling that audiences were struck by her "spirited worship, tender affection and nothing short of joy."

But, years later, when Marian tried to apply at a music school and was rejected because she was African-American, her joy was severely tested. She began to wonder if she wouldn't be allowed to become a professional singer because of her skin colour.

Her mother's faith and the financial support of her church community spurred Marian on. Despite the humiliations she continued to suffer, she "sang her heart with dignity." Years later, she studied and sang in Europe. Back in the U.S., she eventually gave her historic 1939 performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in front of 75,000 people. In 1955, she sang at the Metropolitan Opera.

Marian Anderson's story is a testimony to the power of God's love shaping people who could have become hateful due to discrimination. Negro spirituals interspersed throughout the narrative make this book a celebration of the Lord, who sets his people free from sin, as well as oppression and injustice. ➤



When Marian Sang

by Pam Munoz Ryan
Illustrated by Brian Selznick
(Scholastic Press, 2002)



Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman

by Nikki Grimes
Illustrated by E. B. Lewis
(Orchard Books, 2002)

Bessie Coleman, born in Atlanta, Texas, in 1892, knew hardship and discrimination during a time when segregation was an accepted practice. But, what is more important, she grew up with a mother who made sure Bessie and her siblings learned how to read. The Bible was the first book Bessie read. Her faith in God sustained her as she pursued her dream to become the first African-American woman in the world to fly.

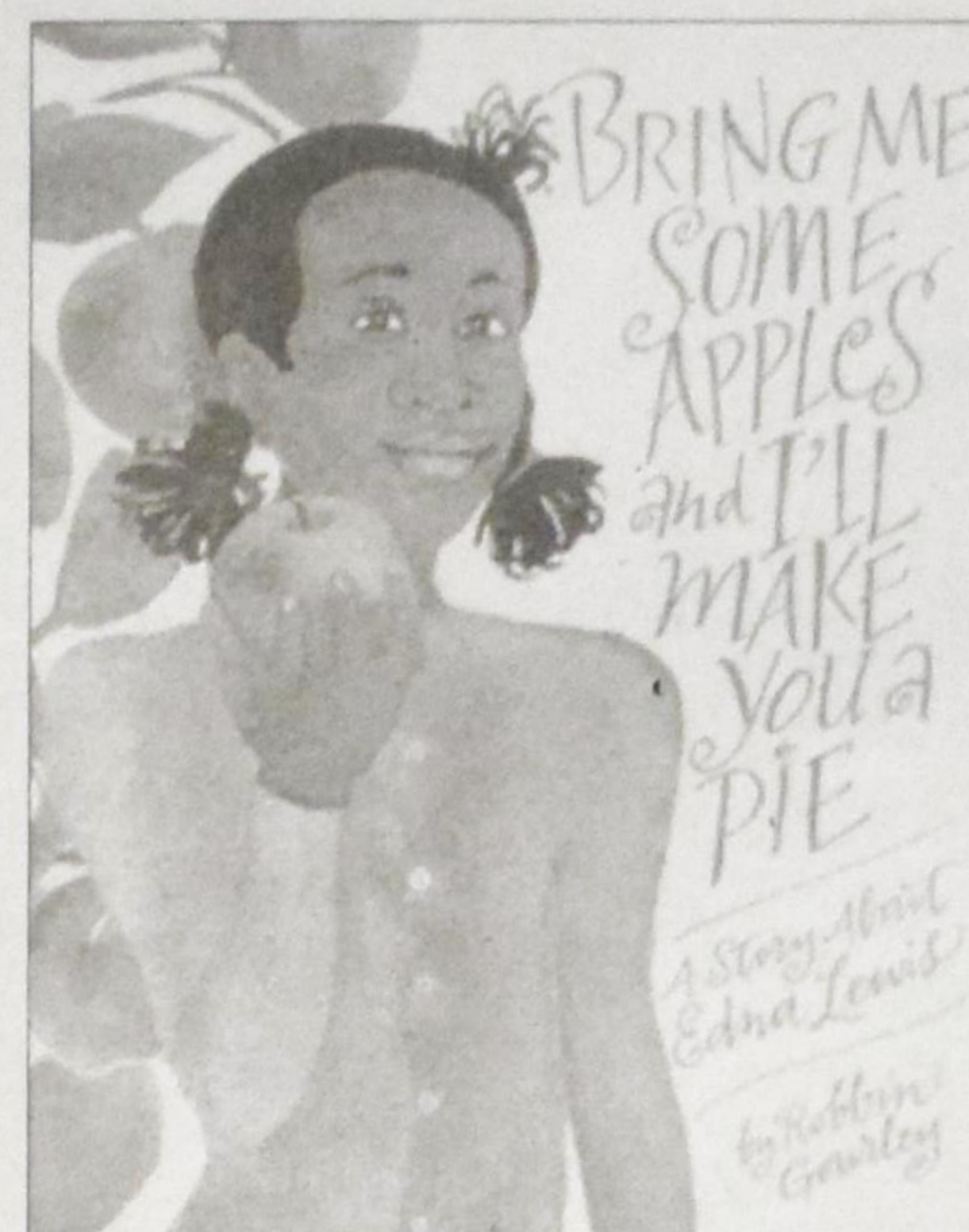
Because no American flight school would accept a black woman, Bessie travelled to Paris and attended the Caudron School of Aviation. At graduation, she returned to the U.S. as the world's first black aviatrix.

Bessie's dream to start an aviation school where Negroes could learn to fly was never realized due to her death at 34 years of age in a plane crash.

E. B. Lewis's striking water colour illustrations capture Bessie's brave, fighting spirit. ➤



Sonya Vanderveen Feddema
(sonyavf55@hotmail.com)
lives in St. Catharines, Ont.
and is a freelance writer.



Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie: A Story About Edna Lewis

by Robbin Gourley
(Clarion Books, 2009)

Edna Lewis, born in 1916 in Freetown, a community founded by emancipated slaves, loved gardening and harvesting fresh produce that was eaten the same day, or was pickled, made into jams, stored in cold cellar or otherwise preserved. Her knowledge of and passion for locally grown fresh food shaped her career choice – she became a professional chef and wrote four cookbooks featuring southern cooking.

Vivid illustrations enhance this story which celebrates, not only the bounty of God's creation, but also how Edna Lewis made people "aware of the importance of preserving traditional methods of growing and preserving food and of bringing ingredients directly from the field to the table." ➤



Ain't Nobody a Stranger to Me

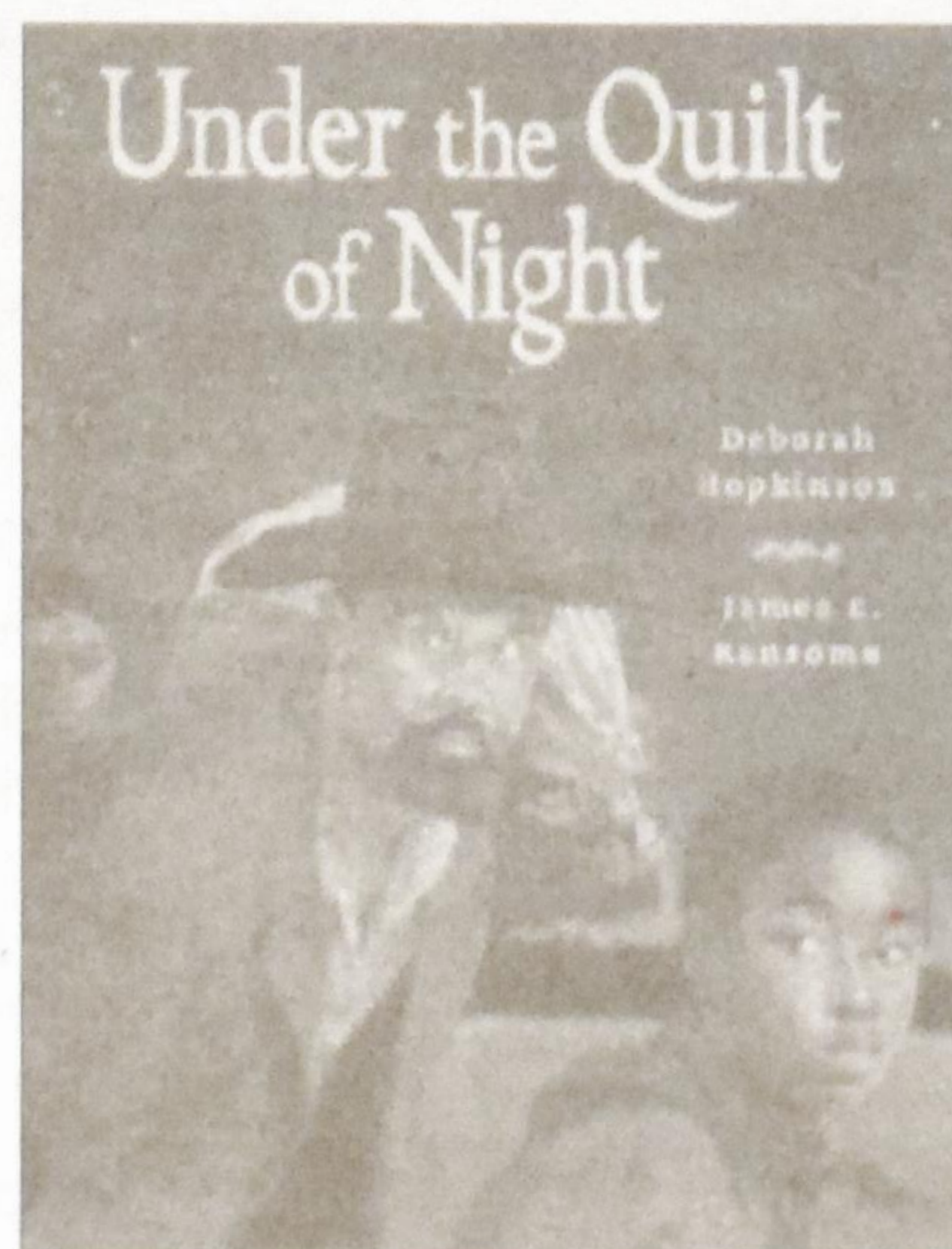
by Ann Grifalconi
Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
(Hyperion Books for Children, 2007)

A young girl and her grandfather, a former slave, walk through town on their weekly trek to his apple orchard. When the girl notices that her grandfather gives friendly greetings to all they meet, she asks him how he knows so many people. He replies, "Don't know 'em by name – just by heart, Honey.... Ain't nobody a stranger to me!" When she asks why, he says, "Cause both me and my heart is free."

Then he tells her about his life as slave. Years earlier he fled the plantation with his wife and child, the girl's mother. He carried apple seeds in his pocket, hoping to one day plant them in his own soil.

After hearing his story, the girl points out how lucky he is. But Grandpa doesn't believe in luck. Instead, he believes that the Good Lord, in whom he trusts, brought him to freedom.

This warmly illustrated picture book is based on the life of a former slave, who uttered "Ain't nobody a stranger to me!" It celebrates the fruition of a man's freedom, not only in his lovely apple orchard, but in the lives of ensuing generations. ➤



Under the Quilt of Night

by Deborah Hopkinson
Illustrated by James E. Ransome
(Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002)

Under the quilt of night, a teenage girl runs and runs, leading a group of fellow slaves away from the master's farm, a place of endless work and misery. But others are relentlessly pursuing them – slave catchers who won't stop at anything to regain their "property." Running, hiding, waiting and watching, the slaves finally arrive in a wood by a farm. The girl watches, then sees a woman hanging a quilt over the fence. The girl knows what to look for: "In most quilts, the center squares are red for home and hearth. But these centers are dark, deep blue." Because this house hides runaway slaves, the girl bravely creeps to the door and knocks, trusting the quilt's message. Friends welcome the slaves into their home and hearts, and later bring them to a road that leads to Canada.

The sparse, energetic text and stunning, vivid illustrations portray the determination and fortitude of slaves seeking freedom. ➤

Features

Love that lasts

Name withheld

I remember the intense physical reaction I had to the news: stomach churning, muscles fluttering, icy cold enveloping me. My mind was racing, struggling to absorb this new reality, while some crazy analytical part of my brain was taking notes in a detached, methodical way. Hours later, I was still dazed as the police officer told me what a brave little lady I was. Brave? Disbelief was keeping me calm, not courage. Disbelief that this could happen to me, a good girl! As the officer explained the sexual nature of the crime my young husband had been charged with, an inexplicable sense of relief washed over me. With the crystalline clarity of hindsight, I knew I had been subconsciously expecting and fearing this kind of news. Now that it had happened, I could finally stop dreading it.

I spent my childhood on the family farm in rural Ontario, dividing my time between church and school activities. The youngest child in a large family, I thrived on the attention of my siblings and the loving devotion of my parents. We had a simple, healthy lifestyle built on the backbone of *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work). My parents' deep faith in God was reflected in every aspect of their lives: their happy marriage, a strong work ethic, a commitment to Christian education and, of course, instruction in the teachings and doctrine of the church, which included a host of unspoken but rigorous rules regarding acceptable behaviour and seemingly outward appearance. I attended the requisite child and youth group activities and at eighteen made the decision to share publicly that I had accepted Christ and his salvation.

Throughout high school I had dated a boy who was not a Christian, whose parents were "unbelievers." I saw the pain and fear this caused my parents and I knew in my heart that this relationship was unhealthy for me. However, as a girl who chose to read instead of play sports, who didn't think school "sucked" but loved learning, who enjoyed playing the piano and making the teachers proud, I was not popular. I had few friends and no dating prospects. Come on, God, a girl needs a boyfriend. Cut me some slack here! Eventually, though, I realized that a future of being "unequally yoked" was not what I wanted. I ended the relationship. I left the farm and my close-knit community and went off to a Christian university.

This was more like it! An environment where everyone enjoyed learning. An opportunity to broaden my world-view at an institution that proclaimed God's love of diversity. A place to develop and mature. A place of acceptance and self-discovery. And boys! Boys who came from faith-based backgrounds like my own. In fact, one boy in particular, with brown eyes and a love for music. A boy who understood and even encouraged my drive to excel in my studies, though he displayed a somewhat puzzling lack of ambition for himself. As we grew closer, I was comforted by the familiarity that our similar upbringing brought to our relationship. We believed the same things, worshipped in the same style, adhered to the same lifestyle rules.

Looked good, felt right

Granted, when we spent time with his family, I eventually understood that their unvoiced mantra was "Fear God, and don't screw up" which was quite different from the "Love God and praise him" interpretation I grew up with. However, he had been baptized, redeemed, and sanctified by the blood. It all looked good, felt right and



moved smoothly along. If my future husband seemed to lack direction and harbour a great deal of resentment toward his family, well, I could fix that! Love can fix anything, right? And, as a special blessing, my father, who had struggled for years with cancer, could walk me down the aisle. It couldn't be more perfect.

A few short weeks before our big day, my husband confessed to me that he had visited a strip club, just once, out of curiosity. After all, he was getting married, and I

Though I remember little about the trial, I still vividly recall what it felt like to be sustained by his Spirit throughout that time.

wouldn't want him to go after the wedding, right? I was surprised and dismayed because it had never occurred to me that as a Christian he would even consider that kind of activity. He laughed the experience off, assuring me that it meant nothing. I agreed to forget about it; after all, the only thing left on the wedding To Do List was the tissue paper flowers for the pews – no time for second thoughts. I was deeply hurt, however, and felt betrayed. Why had I bothered saving myself for marriage if he hadn't been committed to the same kind of purity? His revelation snaked through my thoughts during the wedding ceremony. But I loved him and I made the vows to him that I intended to honour.

A honeymoon was out of the question. My newlywed husband had recently dropped out of university and hadn't been able to find work. I went back to work two days after our wedding. The empty days settled heavily on him. I noticed changes in his behaviour, inconsistencies in his conversation, shortages of money, and absences he couldn't explain. He began to refuse to attend church with me. I hesitated to argue, and tried instead to show him how much I loved him and how important our

marriage was to me. My suspicions about his activities, however, receded into the background as I struggled to cope with the news that my father's illness was no longer responding to treatment.

In the weeks following Dad's death, I spent a lot of time with my family as we supported each other in our grief. I watched my mother mourn the loss of her loving husband. I witnessed the care and love with which my brothers-in-law treated my sisters. I knew my husband's lack of solicitude was evident and his absence conspicuous. Embarrassed and defiant, I redoubled my efforts to engage him in our marriage. He had at last secured employment and seemed more content. I was thrilled to accept a position with a faith-based social service agency. We became members of a large church led by a gifted pastor. Encouraged by the positive changes in our lives and thinking that we had put many outside pressures to rest, I believed that our marriage was beginning to heal. My husband became acquainted with several men in the church and began attending sporadically. I started getting involved in church activities. As we posed for our picture in the annual church directory, I silently thanked God for his sufficient grace through the first difficult years of our marriage.

Then the police called.

A secret life

I discovered that my husband had a life I knew nothing about. That the distasteful indiscretions I had laboured to overlook and forgive were just the tip of a shadowy iceberg of deviancy completely foreign to me. Faced with the collapse of our marriage and the legal consequences of his actions, he begged me to stay with him. He appeared truly penitent. I felt convicted to "forgive as you have been forgiven." The days and nights following his court appearance are hazy in my memory. I do remember being physically ill upon hearing details of his charge. Every time I thought about it, my stomach would seek to heave the betrayal from my body. I couldn't bring myself to tell family or friends, so great was my shame. Soul-screaming, I desperately prayed for strength, though it seemed wrong to approach God about such unsavoury circumstances. To my surprise, God surrounded me with such a comforting presence in those first few days that, at times, I felt I could almost reach out and physically touch him. I could not see him, but felt the warmth of his hand on mine. I experienced the bodily sensation of my pulse-rate being compelled to slow down. I had never experienced such an intimate closeness with God in my highly-regulated faith life before. Though I remember little about the trial, I still vividly recall what it felt like to be sustained by his Spirit throughout that time.

We tried to rebuild our marriage. We began counsel-



Features

ling, and, for a time, I believed it was working. I dearly wanted a "normal" life, to appear as if we had a healthy Christian marriage, so I was willing to settle for a veneer. I soon discovered to my horror that my husband had not changed his lifestyle. In fact, I was so naïve that I had to look up definitions for many of his sexual activities. I wanted to honour the vows I had made before God and witnesses, but I no longer could. I could not condone his lifestyle by repeatedly forgiving him knowing full well that he would undoubtedly re-offend. We agreed to keep the cause of our failed marriage discreet, protecting

extended family members and friends from knowing the full truth. Then, alone, I faced the arduous task of informing my family, friends, and co-workers that my marriage was ending.

I longed to scream, "I didn't leave my marriage. I was crowded out..."

Until recent years, divorce was virtually unheard of in my church. Certainly it was a last resort, much frowned upon. By complying with my ex-husband's plea not to reveal the exact nature of his actions, I had unwittingly set myself up for judgment. And I was indeed judged. Letters came, condemning me for leaving my marriage. People who had not corresponded with me in years felt compelled to urge me not to take my vows so lightly, but to try harder, to have more faith, to put Christ at the centre of my marriage. I longed to scream, "I didn't leave my marriage! I was crowded out ... by pornography, internet liaisons, deviant and criminal behaviour!" Aside from the fleeting satisfaction of shock value, of making someone else feel my revulsion and pain, I knew it would not help. My family and close friends were unbelievably supportive during my divorce. It was their love and God's grace that carried me through the ordeal of starting my life over.



Isn't there anything I can absolutely count on?

It has been many years since my marriage ended. I am gradually adjusting to the idea of returning to a church family. Encouraging me in this direction is, interestingly enough, the man with whom I have begun a new relationship. It wasn't an easy thing to learn to trust again. The words "There's something I have to tell you" can still send me into instantaneous panic. I stumble with trust until he reminds me, "I'm not like him." To say the least! The man I am now dating comes from a background that could not be more different from mine. A childhood of

Love for a lifetime

Mary Ann Benjamins

There's a lot of chatter about love and marriage in the month of February. Everyone wants a love that is going to last a lifetime. As a pastor's wife, I have met many couples hoping for that dream, but not all relationships are ready for as big a step as marriage. Finding love to last a lifetime means doing your homework and asking good questions before you take the plunge.

You need to make sure you're asking your significant other the right questions. How is your faith walk? What church will you attend? What will you do with your money? How many kids do you want? You wouldn't take a new job without asking serious questions; don't treat marriage any less seriously. Believe it or not, Ken and I hung out and studied each other for months before we ever went out on a date.

Also, there are excellent resources out there. Hit your Christian bookstore and keep asking questions until you are both comfortable. When it comes to relationships, getting outside confirmation is also important. If you are really serious about someone, you should seek support from your friends and family.

I remember one particular battle I had with my mother. She carefully expressed concern about someone I was dating. I can't remember his name anymore – just that he was cute. My mother, on the other hand, saw some red flags – different church, different culture, different home life and different values. I thought the fact that he was a Christian was enough. She argued that the more differences, the more difficulties. I headed to the library to arm myself for the battle. I was determined to prove her wrong. To my dismay, all the information I found supported my mother's pearl of wisdom.

This does not mean that dating someone from your church guarantees the success of your relationship. But one way or another, people need to know that differences can add up to a big deal! In other words, if someone you love and trust raises questions about your relationship, then sit up and take notice. Usually, your family and friends have your best interests at heart.

Unfortunately, divorce is a tough reality in today's culture. Not everyone is equipped for marriage, and marriage is not necessarily the best place to fix broken people. Though it seems like there are no guarantees when it comes to love, asking the right questions and seeking the input of others can help lay a foundation for a stable and lasting relationship.



Mary Ann and Ken on their wedding day and now.

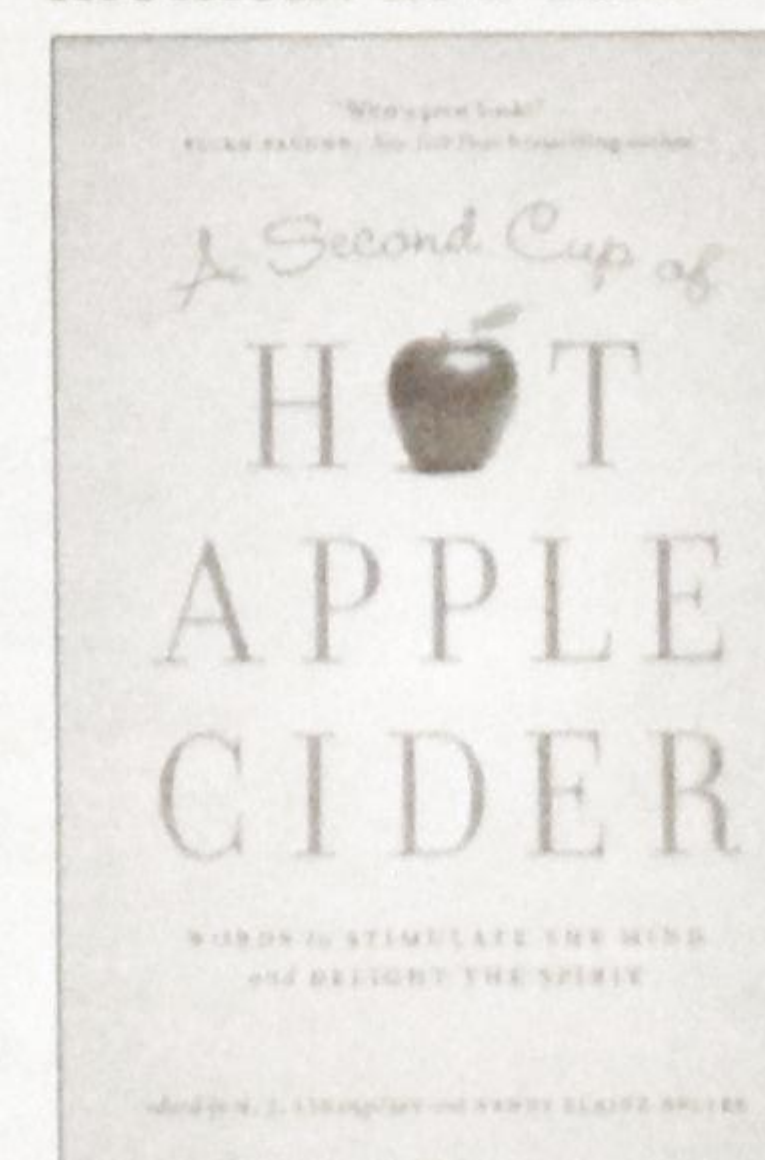
I'm not an expert, though. At the end of the day I can only go by what I know. I married Ken when I was twenty and that was more than twenty years ago. He can irritate me as no one else can and I am the only one who can make him lose his temper in under sixty seconds. Every marriage has rocky periods – the first year after Ken graduated from seminary was one of the toughest years in our marriage. But I had aligned myself

with this man and I was determined to keep fighting until we found common ground again. It took time and prayer, but we got there. We're still together. I'm more in love today than when we first started.

Finally, have fun! We have a ton of what I call mini-dates. We drive

somewhere together. We go out for a snack. We go for a walk. We ban the kids from the basement and watch a movie together. I call him at work just for fun or I buy his favourite cereal when it's on sale and I make a big deal of it. Use your imagination. The fact that you matter to each other will shine through and that's really the point, isn't it?

Loving for a lifetime starts out with doing plenty of research, making a commitment and then following up with good decisions every day. Know yourself and give yourself time to be sure of your partner. Commit to your marriage and fight for it. Nurture your love one special moment at a time.



Mary Ann Benjamins is a supply teacher, writer and Awards Manager for The Word Guild. Find her blog, My Father's Daughter, at maryannbenjamins.wordpress.com. Mary Ann's story about her cancer survival can be found in *A Second Cup of Hot Apple Cider: Words to Stimulate the Mind and Delight the Spirit*.

abuse, neglect, and hardship led to alcoholism and a shattered life. At 33, he finally admitted his powerlessness and sought treatment. He has been sober for six years now. We make an odd pair, the sheltered small town girl and the tough, street-smart city guy in a motorcycle jacket. Not so odd as it might seem upon first glance, though. His character is genuine, open and honest. He is frank, hard-working, and compassionate. I held him as he cried the night he accepted Christ. His faith is simple, solid and unquestioning, a true blessing to me as I put into perspective my personal journey over the past decades.

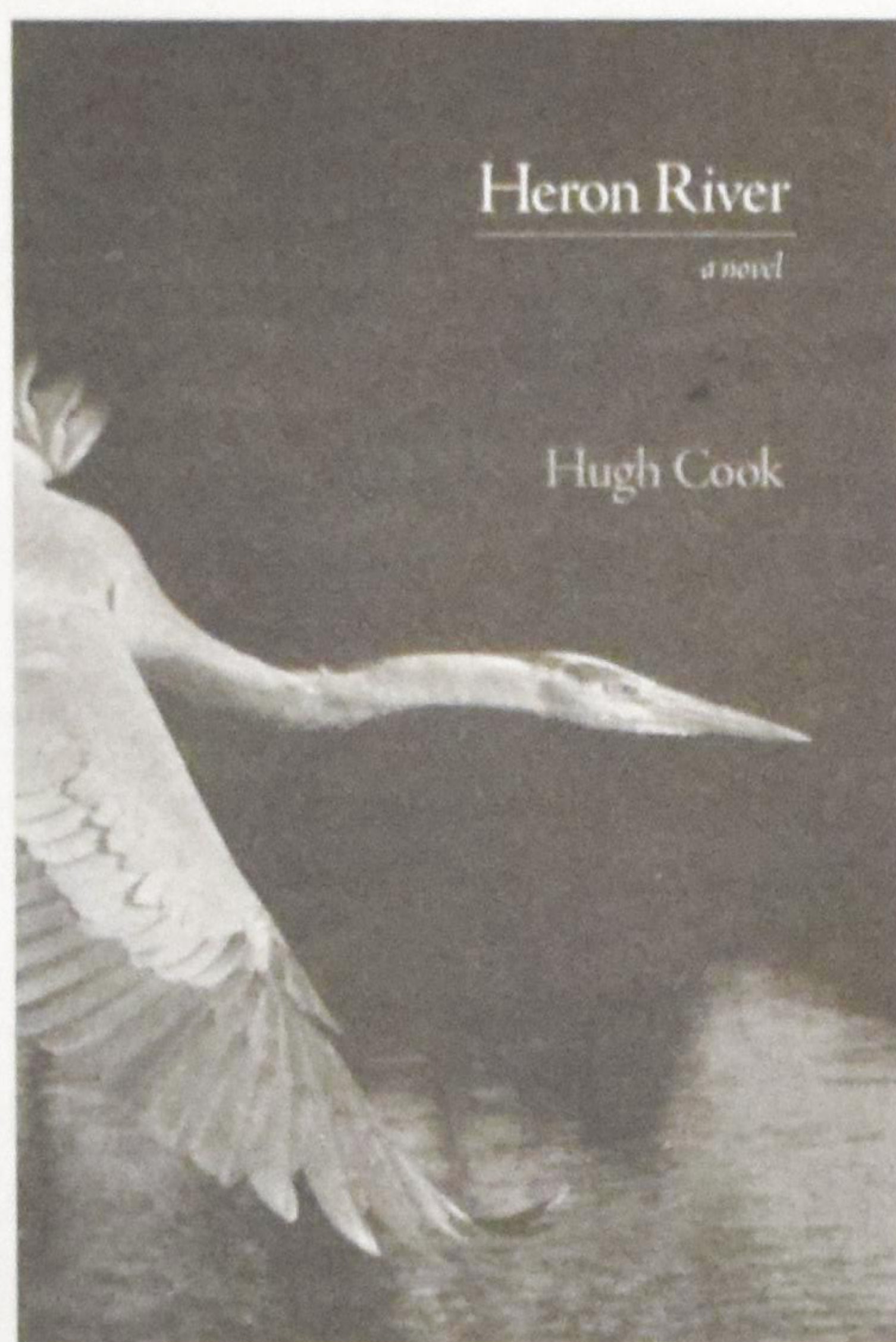
Recently I had to have a hysterectomy. I had to face never becoming a mother, another deeply painful loss. Once again the family and friends God has provided for

me have been an ever-present support. In a moment of emotional weakness, I rebelled: Isn't there anything I can absolutely count on? Am I never going to have anything in this life that is stable, that doesn't change when I least expect it? Immediately I felt again the same warmth, the same comfort that I felt years ago as a shattered wife. God was reminding me: My love is eternal and unchanging. Rest in me.

So I have.

Features

Heron River: It's about what's real



Cathy Smith

Promise me you'll read this novel twice. Don't worry, you'll want to. The first time through you'll be so caught up in the dramatic tension that, like me, you'll simply gulp it down in unseemly drafts, impatient to discover how these disparate characters, who reside in a small safe town, are connected. There's Madeline, a middle-aged teacher battling multiple sclerosis and other multiple losses. Her son Adam lives in a group home, developmentally-delayed from an accident she thinks is due to her own critical error. Imaginative and likable Jacob, an adopted kid, proves susceptible to the adrenaline of slipping into his customers' homes when they're away. Nineteen-year-old Orrin is a powder keg. Tara, a dedicated cop, serves and protects. The lives of these five individuals intersect, but not until the gathering dread reaches a gripping level.

"The details are not the details," said Charles Eames, noted mid-century modern designer. "They make the product." His insight certainly applies to Hugh Cook's achievement in this meticulously-constructed novel. Acutely observant, Cook builds an authentic community out of precisely-rendered and scrupulously-ordered details. The barbershop with its "slightly curved oak pew that Tony picked up when Sacred Heart installed an elevator several years ago," the Native reserve, the abandoned grain mill and the river itself – all granite solid, crafted with measured description that's spare and sinewy, never fussy.

Such attention to detail informs Cook's characters as well. No slap-dash here. Even minor characters are drawn with a particularity that implies more, like the fisherman with eyes "the colour of the beer bottle." Every conversation, glance, and gesture positions the characters in a real world, one we recognize as our own. And, familiarly, the currents of life along Heron River create a mash-up: callousness, sadism, and physical deterioration log-jammed with compassion, caring, and courage.

In an Art Waves radio interview Cook remarked that the writer's job is, first of all, "to tell stories." In *Heron River* he does just that, and it's a compelling tale. But read the book again. Like a painting whose subject runs off the canvas, suggesting a wider plane, the narrative expands, probing our perceptions of what's real. The small town of Caithness is indisputably real, but a spiritual reality hovers there, too, as patient and determined as a heron fishing, waiting to pierce the surface with sudden and irresistible energy.

The story opens with malevolence intruding on an ordinary Monday morning. It's garbage day. The "stealthy, shabby" crows are cawing. Madeline listens to the Mamas and the Papas on the radio: "Oh, Monday morning, Monday morning couldn't guarantee, That Monday evening you would still be here with me." Prophetic lyrics. By evening, the Adam she knew was no longer with her, and successive revelations of compounded sorrow establish the wide-ranging effects of his fall, a spreading misery evoking a more cosmic fall.

Intimations of grace and hope

But there are other ripples, too, intimations of grace and hope. Madeline's friend Donna has a smile that "continually plays at the corners of her mouth, as if she's the perpetual recipient of good news." When Madeline finds a photo of the mother she never

knew in her father's old Dutch Bible, she unearths an even better surprise – comfort in a place she'd overlooked. After a suspect punches Tara in the mouth, she must undergo the painstaking restoration of a front tooth. Her trusted dentist expertly affixes the new crown, the procedure containing within itself the faintest outline of another *terra* waiting to be restored.

Jacob's quick-witted lying covers his misdeeds. His cunning (his surname is, in fact, Cunningham) reminiscent of that archetypal biblical deceiver who, nonetheless, was chosen and marked by the mysterious wrestler at Peniel. Young Jacob is likewise chosen, first in his adoption, and then again when he is recruited to be an altar boy at St. Paul's. Leaving the sacristy after his first service, "invisible choirs of birds raise a riotous, chirruping psalm as if today were the first morning of a new creation."

Adam, perennially on the lookout for the majestic heron as he walks along the river, is afforded a close-up view at last. As he approaches the bird, he realizes with amazement that the heron is moving ever so deliberately to keep him in its sight as well. Eager to follow the bird as it flies off, Adam begins to cross a dangerously high railroad bridge above the river. He panics when a bystander's warning shouts cause him to recognize his foolhardiness. Fortunately, his native friend Keller is nearby to talk him

back to safety. Before Adam reaches the bank, however, a grey shadow startles him, "large as the shadow of a moving cloud," another allusive Old Testament nod. It's the blue heron "flying over the water larger than he has ever seen it. As large as something he might see in a dream." Rescued from the depths of a well, Adam has conquered the heights, thrilled with this rapturous meeting in the air.

These transcendent glimmers are not a facile overlay. Cook's tenacious exactitude, whether it's about baking a pie or cleaning a gun, that same truthfulness from which emerge his textured settings and fully-dimensioned characters, lends an equivalent veracity to these flickers of redemption. Nor are all questions tidily answered. Madeline wonders who is watching the 99 while the shepherd is out searching for the one lost sheep. Orrin, raised by an addicted mother in a highly dysfunctional home, is a complex figure whose actions and culpability challenge easy assumptions.

There's so much more. Read this multi-layered book twice. Maybe even a third time. I will.

Cathy Smith (cathy@christiancourier.ca) is features editor with CC. She lives in Wyoming, Ont.



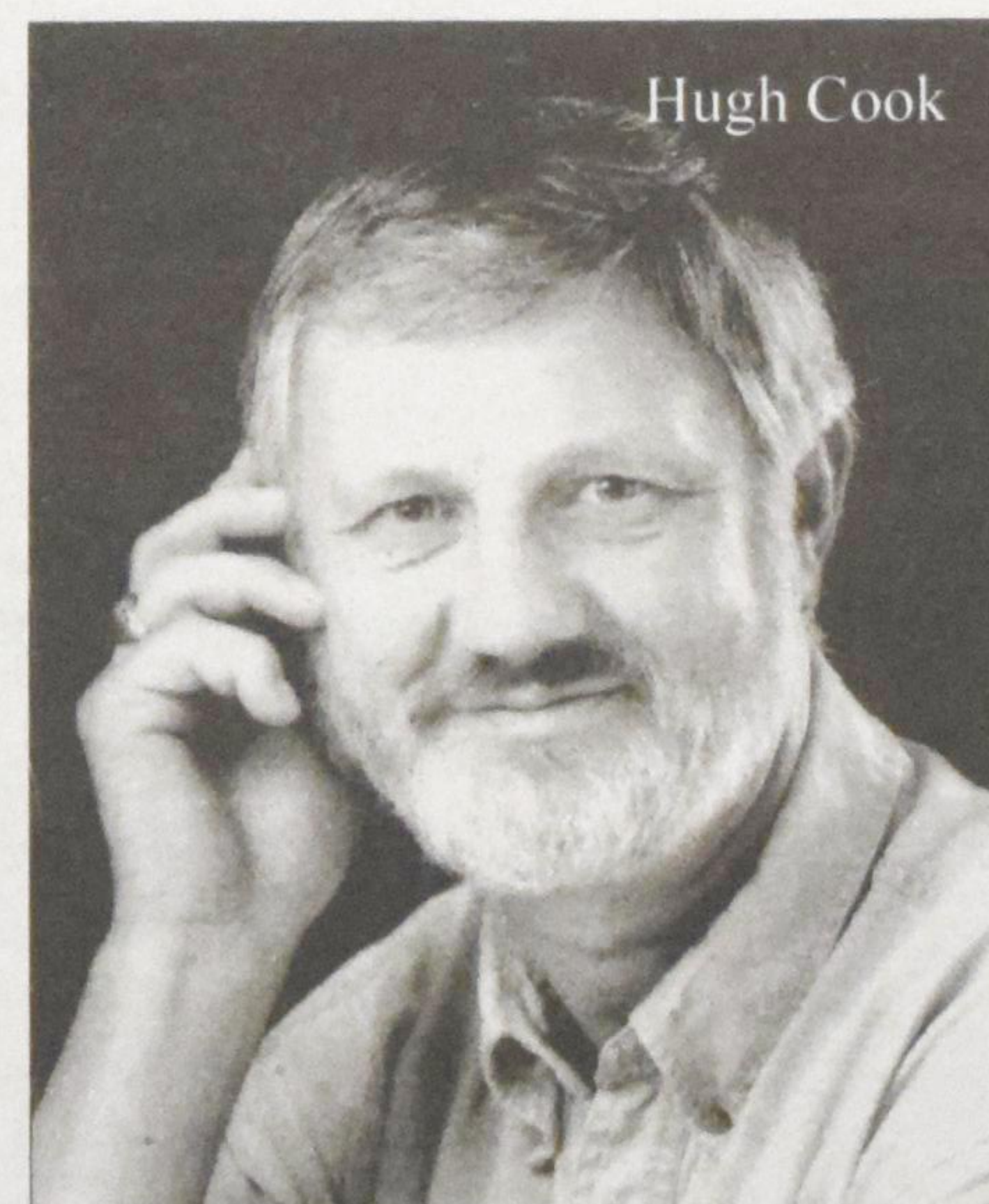
Hugh Cook's fiction: 'Grounding it in reality and pigs'

John Van Rys

Hugh Cook's new novel, *Heron River*, begins with "This is how Madeline will remember it years later." This thought-provoking sentence invites readers into the territory of memory – the pastness of the past but its continuing life in the present. In many ways, Cook's larger body of fiction explores this territory in a decidedly Canadian, immigrant, Christian context.

Born in The Hague, Cook immigrated to Canada in 1950 at the age of seven, his family settling in Burnaby, BC. His fiction is rooted in that experience, at least sociologically and spiritually if not in strict autobiographical detail. Through his short stories and novels, Cook traces the tensions between the Old World and the New, between what is now the realm of memory and the present pressures of a culture characterized by difference. His body of work recounts how this Dutch-Reformed immigrant Canadian community has naturally changed and integrated into the broader culture, while still occupying another place in memory. Cook approaches this community, and the way time has passed for this community, with a mixture of humour and pathos.

This concern with being at home, signaled by the titles of two of Cook's works, places him in the company of other



Dutch-Canadian writers, notably Aritha van Herk, Guy Vanderhaeghe, and John Terpstra, all of whom express in their writing a deep attachment to place, whether it be the Cypress Hills or the city of Hamilton. But more broadly, Cook's fiction belongs to the growing body of work by Canadian immigrants, whether it be Carol Shields coming to Canada from the U.S., Michael Ondaatje from Sri Lanka, or Rohinton Mistry from India. South of the border, Cook's Dutch-Reformed concern with the relevance of faith commitments for all of life connects him with writers such as Stanley Wiersma and James Schaap.

Outstanding contribution to the field of Christian writing

A graduate of Calvin College (BA) and Simon Fraser University (MA), Cook earned his MFA in fiction in 1978 from the Writer's Workshop of the University of Iowa, arguably the finest writing school in the United States. He did so while teaching at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, before coming to Redeemer University College, where he taught creative writing, Canadian Literature, and American Literature from 1982-2005. While his early work was as a poet, Cook's first fiction publication was the short-story collection *Cracked Wheat and Other Stories* (1985), stories of Dutch immigrant experience captured through diverse narrators and perspectives, and touching upon themes of order and disorder, peace and violence. What followed in 1989 was Cook's first novel, *The Homecoming Man*, centred on a father-son relationship strained by a WWII trauma not left behind by immigrating to Canada. In 1998, Cook's *Home in Alfalfa* revealed his more comic take on the Dutch-Canadian, rural Reformed experience. This collection of stories earned Cook a Hamilton Book Award from the Hamilton and Region Arts Council, as well as a first prize in fiction from The Word Guild. With the publication this year of *Heron River*, Cook opens up new territory

Columns

Intangible Things

Heidi Vander Slikke



The column was due yesterday. I prayed that God would help me produce a worthwhile piece of writing. I e-mailed Mike and promised to send it in by close of business today.

I told him my "business" is open late, but didn't mention that my business is procrastination.

I drank coffee and had devotions with Jack. After breakfast I made my morning rounds outside and took care of the usual household tasks. All the while I bounced around ideas of what I might possibly write about this month. I had a topic in mind for quite awhile already, but when I set my pencil to paper I soon discovered it's still too raw and personal to print.

I grabbed my devotional book by Charles Spurgeon in the hope of some inspiration. The problem with reading someone like Spurgeon is that his writing is so powerful, I feel like a first grade piano student sitting down to play Chopsticks after listening to a concert musician.

I made some phone calls, perused the latest *Christian Courier*, and stared out the window. Then I pulled a few random books from the shelf – Augustine on prayer, a commentary on Isaiah, a book of essays on the problem of pain. I flipped through the pages and prayed again that God would give

Doing what comes naturally

me something to write about.

Jack came in for lunch and listened to my whining. He suggested half a dozen ideas that would make great subjects some other day. For the moment my thoughts were too scattered. The harder I tried to rein them in, the more I focused on my inability to focus.

I decided to practice the "button chair" method. I learned this one in a book on writing by Heather Sellers. She suggests that if you cannot discipline yourself to write, you should put your *butt on the chair* and resolve to stay there for an hour. That exercise netted a 700 word rant on writers' block.

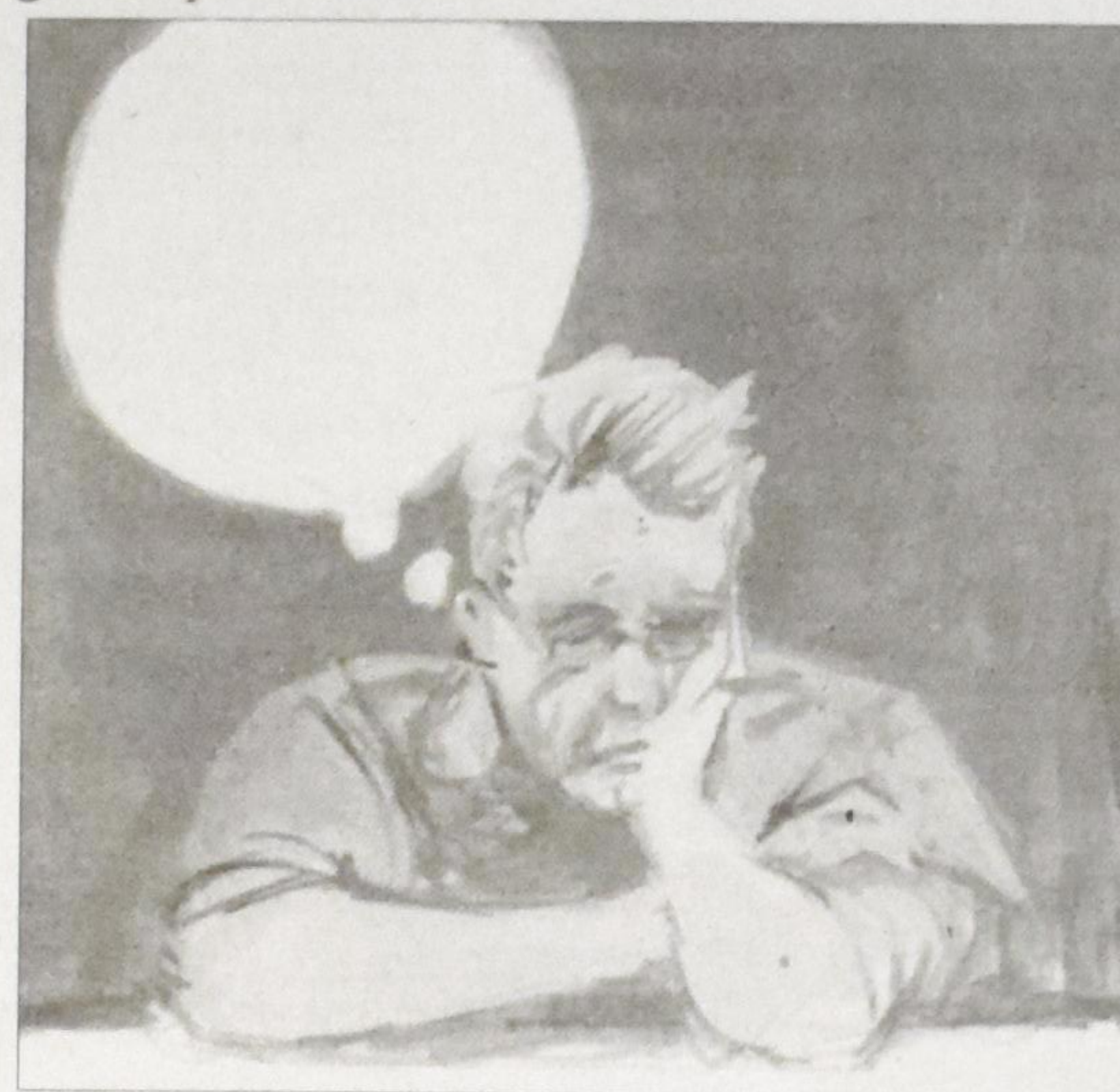
In the old days I would have flogged myself with my HB #2 pencil by then, berating myself for lack of talent and commitment to the craft. But I've been hanging around writers long enough to know that most suffer from creative constipation now and then. Someday the words might flow again. In the meantime the sun would continue to rise and set, whether or not I submitted a column.

Writer's block and believer's block

Still – writers write, right? Why was it so hard to do what should come naturally to me?

Before I closed my eyes to sleep, I prayed once more. That is, I tried to pray. My thoughts ricocheted around my brain like

shots fired in a metal box. Anxious petitions pierced calm praise and thanksgiving. Sentences exploded into nonsense before they were even complete. Exasperated, I gave up.



As every writer knows, sometimes the words just don't come.

Prayer has been called the "breath of the soul." A bowed head and open heart should be the default posture of every Christian. How could this be so difficult?

According to Augustine, even inanimate objects will travel in the direction for which they were intended. Fire will rise. Stones will drop to the ground. Oil poured into water will float to the top. The human heart should pull toward its Creator, but since we are stained by sin, our natural inclination

now drifts away from the true source of our happiness. Anxiety, disappointment and circumstances easily distract us and draw our focus away from the Lord.

That was Peter's problem when he walked on water, wasn't it? He was doing fine until he took his eyes off of Jesus and focused on the waves. And Martha, busy with all her preparations, meant well. Her fault was allowing the busyness to distract her from listening quietly to the Lord.

Spurgeon's words popped into my head. "We do not know what prayer cannot do." Think of it! When we come to our heavenly Father in prayer, the potential is literally beyond comprehension. The possibilities are so vast that we cannot guess at what might *not* be accomplished. Why then, do we waste time trying?

I fell asleep chasing that train of thought. And this morning I woke up hopeful that I might be able to share these ideas in a column. Whether or not you've experienced a creative block in your life, I'd be surprised if you haven't known the frustration of a believer's block. The best thing I can write about this month is to encourage you to focus on the Lord, even for help in the ability to do what should come naturally to us all.

Heidi Vander Slikke (hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com) lives in Harriston, Ont.

Hugh Cook...continued from p. 12

in a fascinating exploration of small-town crime and punishment that broadens out beyond the Dutch-Canadian, Reformed experience. This novel confirms that Cook deserves the Leslie K. Tarr Award for outstanding contribution to the field of Christian writing that he received in 1997 from The Word Guild.

By clear confession a Reformed Christian, Cook has nevertheless resisted the temptation to write popular Christian fiction for only a Christian audience. Rather, he has strived to gain a hearing in the larger culture, to publish in literary magazines and with literary publishing houses. Above all, Cook is a wordsmith, a craftsman who invests his talent in each story, each character, each word. In an interview with the American poet John Leach, Cook explained that starting as a poet taught him "verbal economy" and "the importance of the concrete detail," meaning that every detail has a purpose. Referring jokingly to some of the comic elements in *Home in Alfalfa*, Cook explained to Leach, "I just keep grounding it in reality and pigs." Such comments speak to the rich level of evocative detail in Cook's fiction, the earthy sense of reality, including even the grotesque and the farcical. Such resonant reality can be found in nicotine-stained fingers, a locked door, a broken

storm window, a carved turtle or a heron flying beneath a train trestle. In "Gift of Finest Wheat," it is a loaf of communion bread, left-overs fed to ducks, with "the blue and green iridescence on the ducks' heads glittering in the sunlight with the very effulgence and glory of the risen Christ." Last fall in a *Hamilton Spectator* op-ed commemorating the tenth anniversary of 9/11, Cook argued that "[w]e go to art and literature not as a way of escaping reality, but as a way of forcing us back to facing

reality." This claim testifies to the way that the realism of Cook's stories and novels works upon readers, in symbolically gritty and beautiful details.

Sometimes painful, sometimes joyful workings of grace

What such realism also shows is that Cook, often subtly and indirectly, claims all of life for the Lord. And while Nature interests Cook, it is really human nature that drives forward his narratives. It is character that is his concern – not so much what is going to happen next, but why people do what they do, what explains who we are.

In "A Canadian Education," what explains Eileen's lie about her father, or in "Easter Lily," how are we to understand Terry's destruction of such a non-offending, symbolically positive flower? In *The Homecoming Man*, what is it that keeps the door locked between Paul and his father Gerrit? In "Putting Up the Storms," what are the struggles of an aging widower such as Milt Coombs, beyond chickens, squirrels and windows? In *Heron River*, why does Madeline carry an enormous burden of guilt over an accident in no way her fault, and how has that accident coloured her life? Through such questions, Cook's fiction explores the brokenness experienced by all God's

children through the seasons of their lives, but more than that these stories celebrate the luminous moments of daily life, the communion available in community, and the sometimes painful, sometimes joyful workings of grace.

Recently, Hugh Cook visited my Canadian Literature class at Redeemer, a class that he once taught before semi-retiring in 2005. We were discussing *Heron River*, which my students had just read. Cook engaged this young generation of Christians in a lively discussion of fiction and faith. What concerns him, he shared, is the mystery of what it means that God made us free creatures, free to make so many choices in our lives. He also explained that as a writer, your worldview chooses not just what you write but what you even choose to write about. Above all, he said, as a writer he refuses to be moralistic or didactic: stories are not sermons. Instead, Cook simply wants to tell good stories – richly realized, mystery-honouring – that Hugh Cook has given readers.

Dr. John Van Rys is a professor of English at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont.



Features

Thoughts about excellence and authority in Christian schools

John Joosse

This article is primarily intended as a response to John Tamming's "Christian schools and teacher firing" (CC Dec. 12). Tamming's article raises two main points. The first is that the prevalence of incompetent teachers with seniority is a significant barrier to academic excellence in our Christian schools. The second is that boards are unable, under the present circumstances, to deal effectively and efficiently with this problem.

Tamming points out that he experienced both excellence and mediocrity at his Christian high school *alma mater*. Not surprising. Both are indeed found everywhere and in every profession. I feel we must, however, be careful not to equate seniority with mediocrity, nor should we place a particular onus of proof on those with seniority. The vision of excellence in education should be shared by all stakeholders. The more important questions to be addressed are: What does the pursuit of excellence really look like? What does that really mean? Who decides what is excellent and according to what criterion?

First, there is the matter of seniority. I'd like to suggest that the attention to seniority in and of itself is problematic. Seniority can quickly become a pejorative term and put all senior teachers on the defensive. We used to honour and respect experience and accumulated wisdom but now it is frequently a liability, both in Christian schools and in the workforce at large. In an atmosphere of tight budgets seniority is definitely a liability. It can even consciously or subconsciously tempt school boards to "look for" weaknesses and vulnerabilities to justify a principal's or COO's (sometimes instructed) decision to terminate a senior teacher. At worst, these situations have the potential to turn into witch hunts.

When discussing these issues it is helpful to use specific examples. In May 2010, I learned that two former colleagues and senior Christian high school teachers with more than 40 years of service between them had been abruptly terminated at the end of the school year with little or no due process. I became somewhat involved in the situation, and was distressed at the extent to which the board and its counsel were willing to go

in order to discredit and intimidate the teachers who had been terminated. As the situation progressed, the board and counsel sensed that they were possibly on thin ice and began to push things to the limit both ethically and legally. Also disheartening was the fact that people outside the situation with a responsibility to speak out and defend the teachers in question were pressured to keep silent. One person in this position tried to do so, but was "reined in" and eventually also terminated. These are just two examples of a recent legacy of at least 10 questionable terminations in our Christian schools. What happened in these cases would not have happened in other school systems with better systems of employee representation, advocacy and defined arbitration or grievance procedures. If the respective boards had followed specified mediation procedures established by a joint Mediation Commission of OACS, OCSAA and OCSTA there would have been opportunity to follow proper due process.

Power and authority

Second, there is the matter of allocating power and authority. As a product of western legal education, Tamming surely knows how important concepts like *habeas corpus*, due process and the rule of law are to our legal system and to the protection of individuals from those in positions of power and authority. These concepts are in fact the very pillars of our system of justice and set important standards for institutions and relationships, including contractual, and between individuals as well. A long history of struggle with authorities to the point of bloodshed lies behind these essential concepts. Notwithstanding difficulties school boards may have in their efforts to terminate the contracts of teachers with seniority, it is painful to see improper board decisions and indiscretions swept under the carpet of "protecting" academic excellence and Christian education.

While many areas in the world are struggling to understand the importance of democratic institutions and due process in their establishment, management and enforcement of the rules, it sometimes appears that our Christian school movement is moving in the opposite direction in which there is greater concentration of power, less democracy and less

input from, and accountability to the membership. Principals are becoming Chief Operating Officers with increased powers, including near autonomous power to hire and fire. Education and other committees have been pared down or disbanded and some or all of their responsibilities have been given to the COO. Furthermore, society members can no longer communicate directly to boards and must communicate only with the COO (who often has the authority to decide whether or not to pass that communication on to the board). Staffs and individual staff members cannot communicate directly with their boards and must go through the COO who, again, has the authority to pass the message on or not at his/her discretion. Membership has increasingly limited opportunity to present board nominations or make amendments to board policy changes from the floor of membership meetings. Boards make their own "in house" nominations for new board members and the membership can only approve or disapprove these. Many memberships no longer have the

time they are certainly more marketable than a Biblical, Reformed prophetic radical counter-cultural and antithetical-to-"the Empire" worldview and lifestyle espoused by the likes of Muggeridge, Goudzwaard, Seerveld, Grant, Blake, Brueggemann, Isaiah and a myriad of other prophets. It appears that in the present perceived "crisis in Christian education," marketability becomes a more important consideration than worldview. Not surprisingly, the recently dismissed teachers mentioned above were among the most overt on their staffs in holding up Muggeridge and Goudzwaard as prophets, alerting us to the issue of the assimilation of dominant cultural values in our lifestyles, calling us to repentance in our worldviews, and challenging us in the way we educate our children. Also, and again not surprisingly, the teachers mentioned above were also among those most reluctant to succumb to pressure to "dumb down" in terms of course requirements and grading. All this brings to mind the question of how "excellence" is defined and by whom.

Calvin Seerveld warned us many years ago of the trend toward the "businessification" of Christian education and the negative effect it might entail.

right or privilege to disapprove or approve actions of boards over the past year. This significant power shift does not allow for a balanced input from all stakeholders.

Christian education and excellence

Third, there is the question of excellence in education. Emphasis on "excellence," however honourable and necessary, can also distract from the real purpose of Christian education. This summer I met a retired clergyman and long-time supporter of Christian education, and he spoke about a Christian school in his area. Surprisingly he spoke *only* of how that Christian school was offering such superior academic education. Whereas academic excellence, personal affirmation and positive re-enforcement and volunteer social service projects are all necessary components of Christian education, they do not constitute Christian education in and of themselves. At the same

What has also become apparent is that the composition of school boards has changed over the years. Many boards now consist mainly of business owners and managers. There is, of course, nothing intrinsically wrong with this but it can and, I would suggest, has in some cases led to business governance models being introduced which do not fit certain schools. Whereas this development can have both positive and negative repercussions, it would seem to me that constitutions should encourage balanced representation and guard against a certain sector of society becoming more prominent. In this regard, Calvin Seerveld warned us many years ago of the trend toward the "businessification" of Christian education and the negative effect it might entail.

A Reformed Christian subculture such as ours, owes it to our Author and Finisher to humbly retain our prophetic calling and be very wary of certain kinds of assimilation and conformity. Con-

stant prayer, attention to Scripture and its prophets, soul-searching, wisdom and discussion is required to retain that identity. Unfortunately our lifestyles and practices often seem to belie our rhetoric; we really do believe and place our securities in modernity and all that that entails. Even though it's hard to "bite the hand that feeds us," hypocrisy, often more apparent to outsiders, is a very negative witness. I sometimes wonder if Christian education is fair to our children because we often expect more from them in terms of Kingdom citizenship than we demonstrate ourselves as adults.

I was also struck in Tamming's article by the casual way we often denigrate our public or separate schools. Whereas some may be mediocre, many are also very excellent. The public and separate systems must offer education to demographics which Christian schools can mostly, even if not intentionally, avoid. Most of the leaders in Canadian society still do and will come from the public and separate school systems. Furthermore, it would seem to me that we as citizens and Christians should have as much concern for mediocrity in the separate and public systems as we do in our private schools. Elitism and bigotry are attitudes we must work hard to avoid and eliminate.

In closing, I feel we must be careful not to so easily lay the fault of our weaknesses and inadequacies at the feet of parents and teachers. Perhaps the greater challenge for the future lies not in ridding our schools of mediocrity but in finding ways for creativity and imagination to flourish. Instead of a focus on how to fire our teachers, thereby creating an adversarial educational environment, our time might be better spent improving the ways we supervise and support our educators, creating an atmosphere that is free from fear and ripe with inspiration.

John Leonard Joosse lives in Ingersoll and tries to fix things but sometimes fails. He is now on social assistance.



Columns

The Public Square

Harry Antonides



The war against freedom of speech is in full swing. It has been going on for a number of years in Western democracies in the name of combatting intolerance and "hate speech." In reality it is a determined effort by the Muslim leadership, via the UN, to criminalize any sort of critical public discussion about Islam. What is most disconcerting is that the so-called free West has fully abetted the destruction of freedom by passing legislation that in effect destroys one of the foremost, indispensable features of a truly free society.

In many countries, including Canada, people have been hauled before courts and human rights commissions and charged with hate crimes. Sometimes these people have been exonerated at great financial expense, while at other times they have been found guilty. The question that should haunt us is why this is happening? Let's consider one such recent case. What happened, and what lies behind this travesty?



Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff was convicted of denigrating Islam for comments she made about the prophet Muhammad.

Free speech made into crime

Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff is Austrian-born but has lived in a number of Muslim countries, including Iran, Kuwait and Libya. When she began to take an interest in Islam and immersed herself in the study of that religion, she was shocked by what she found in the Koran and the life of Muhammad. In 2008, Sabaditsch-Wolff began conducting seminars on Islam and "how the doctrines of multiculturalism and Eurabia were so firmly entrenched in Austrian society."

In November 2009, a reporter who had secretly recorded two of Sabaditsch-Wolff's presentations reported her to the Austrian authorities. She was accused of sowing hatred against Muslims and saying that the Koran is an evil book. All her statements were taken out of context, and she was met with an outpouring of hatred from many Austrian officials. One Muslim official compared her to bin Laden.

Formal charges were filed and her trial began on Nov. 23, 2010. The judge abruptly suspended the hearings until Jan. 18, 2011, ostensibly to give himself time to review the tape recordings of Sabaditsch-Wolff's presentations. At the hearing on that date, the judge added a new charge, namely, "denigration of religious beliefs of a legally

How freedom dies

recognized religion." The hearing was again postponed, this time to Feb. 15, when the judge exonerated Sabaditsch-Wolff of the hate-speech charge because her statements were not made in a "provocative" manner. But he then found her guilty of the new charge of "denigrating" Islam.

A black day for Austria

The judge ruled that Sabaditsch-Wolff had committed a crime by stating in her seminars that Muhammad was a pedophile. Her actual words were that "Muhammad had a thing for little girls." He ruled that Muhammad's sexual contact with nine-year-old Aisha did not make him a pedophile because he was also attracted to older females. Go figure.

Sabaditsch-Wolff was ordered to pay a fine of 480 euros plus the cost of the trial, or a sentence of 60 days in prison. She appealed to the Provincial Appellate Court in Vienna, which rejected her appeal. The Court told her that she will go to prison if the fine is not paid within the next six months. After the trial, Sabaditsch-Wolff said that her conviction represents "a black day for Austria." The Vienna Federation of Academics stated that the ruling represented "politically and sentimentally motivated justice" and marked "the end of freedom of expression in Austria."

To be sure, Sabaditsch-Wolff is not the only Austrian who has run into the anti-free speech laws. In January 2009, Susanne Winter, an Austrian Member of Parliament, was convicted of the crime of saying that today Muhammad would be considered a "child molester" because of his marriage to Aisha. Winter was also found guilty of "incitement" for saying that Austria faces an "immigration tsunami." She was ordered to pay a fine of 24,000 euros, and received a suspended three-month prison sentence.

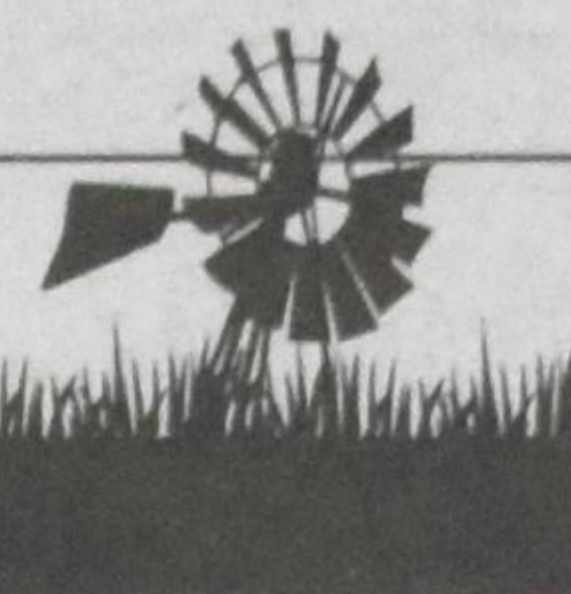
To understand the plight of the Austrian free speech advocates and those in many other Western countries we need to know the role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a powerful UN coalition of 56 Islamic states. It is this organization that has for many years attempted to criminalize all public criticism of Islam in the non-Muslim countries.

In 2009, President Obama pledged to Muslim audiences in Cairo and Istanbul that he would use his presidential authority to advance the interest of Islam. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton played a major role in putting that policy into effect. She has been in intensive discussions with the OIC, including at a high-level conference in Washington in mid-December 2011. Those who are concerned about freedom of speech should pay a lot of attention to these ongoing deliberations.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) retired as director of the former Work Research Foundation. He lives in Willowdale, Ont.

Country Living

Meindert Vander Galien



Fabric covered barns?



When I'm driving through a rural area for the first time I take note of the farmhouses and barns. They can tell you a lot about the people who farmed the land, and the land itself. Every area is different.

For example, in Renfrew County, Ont. there are large brick homes built 100 years ago, houses built from stone, log houses, frame wooden houses covered in brick siding or vinyl, and brick-clad and vinyl-clad bungalows. There isn't one type of house that dominates the landscape. But drive up to farm country in northern Ontario and you'll see mostly bungalows, though not brick-clad ones. Drive through Mennonite country in the St. Jacobs area of southern Ontario and you'll see many stately brick homes. Other areas (east and west coast) have mostly wood frame houses.

To the casual observer, barns are a much-neglected and ignored part of Canada's agricultural legacy. To a non-farmer, a barn is a barn is a barn – a place to store hay in the loft and perhaps keep a few animals. Barns have always been the most important buildings on the farm, and the real soul of the operation. Soon after arriving on their new properties, the earliest settlers immediately set out to build a shelter for their animals.

What strikes many of us as we drive along rural roads is seeing abandoned barns that age away quietly. There are still some North American barns from the last 150 years that are landmarks of beauty and culture – the simple and practical expression of a people, a way of life and the land from which they sprang.

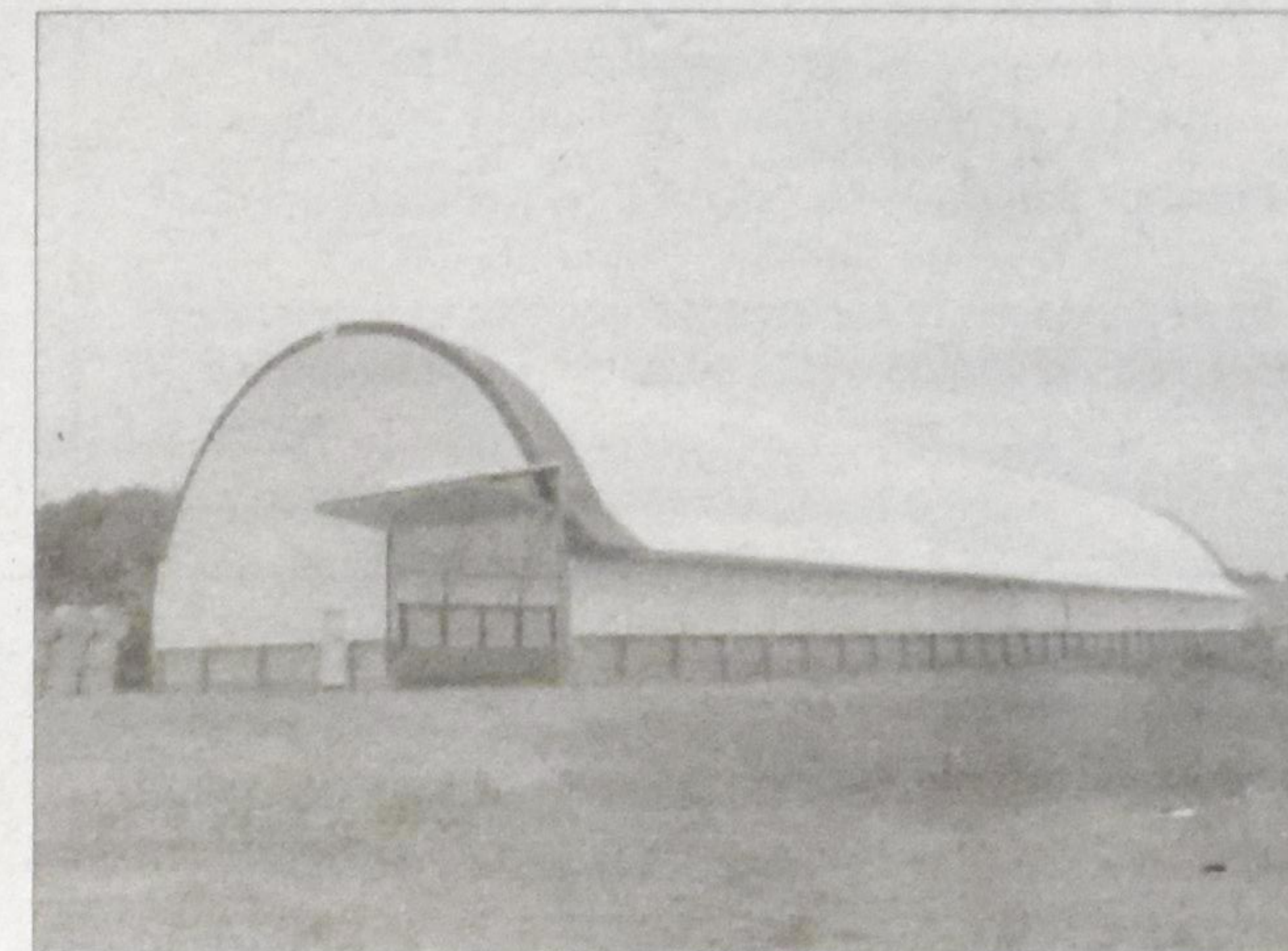
The mighty bank barn or banked barn still dots the landscape in Ontario. They were a popular 19th century barn style in Ontario and in the U.S. Often built into the side of a hill or a bank, both the upper and lower floors could be accessed from ground level. The top level of the barn could also be accessed from a ramp if a hill was not available.

The big barns tell me that the operation was a prosperous one, but not necessarily done on good soil. Farms on marginal land with a large acreage of good bush also prospered.

Cheaper, easy to assemble barns

Just as huge barns physically dominate the rural landscape the way skyscrapers dominate an old city block, the rural look has changed drastically in recent years with the arrival of new types of cheaper

barns – the fabric-covered one. The first time I saw this type of round barn it reminded me of the early settlers in America who moved west in canvas-covered wagons. Canvas was strung over five or six frames made from wooden bows that arched from side to side. How strange that that simple technique is being used again – this time on a much wider span.



A fabric covered barn.

The interesting thing I've noticed about these new barns is that you don't see them in the St. Jacobs and Elmira region, or the whole area around Kitchener-Waterloo. You don't see them in northern Ontario or across the Ottawa River (from us) in the Pontiac (western Quebec).

In California you only see steel structures with open sides. These are not being used for storage. And I didn't see fabric covered barns in Oregon. There are, however, a few further north around Lynden, Wash. That's dairy country. As you get closer to the Canada-U.S. border, more fabric covered barns sprout up like giant mushrooms. There are fabric covered barns 10-15 miles on each side of the border – probably because of the wet weather.

Drive east of Renfrew and you won't see a fabric barn until you hit good agricultural land in the Arnprior and Pakenham area. They are everywhere there.

On the road we live on west of Renfrew there are 12 fabric covered barns in an eight kilometre stretch. One farm has four. The Barr Line road north of us is flat as a pancake and has good soil and good farms, but there's only one fabric covered barn off on a side road.

In my quest to see which area has the most, Admaston, Arnprior and Pakenham (in the Ottawa Valley) probably have the most new barns anywhere – maybe in all of Canada.

The question is how will future historians view these structures. Will they still be around like the old bank barns?

Meindert van der Galien is a Renfrew-area (Ont.) farmer. He doesn't have a fabric-covered barn.

Classifieds

JANTINA (Tina) FRANCES HUBERTS (nee **Tolsma**)
of Moorefield
passed away peacefully on Wednesday,
January 4, 2012 in her 79th year.

After a two week battle with encephalitis,
the Lord in His loving wisdom received Tina Huberts to
eternal glory. We are thankful in the knowledge that our
Mom and Oma is no longer suffering physical pain and
that she is rejoicing with her faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Tina will be missed by her beloved husband of 55 years,
Ben Huberts, and by her children
Bill (Cheryl), Fran, Harry (Bernadette), Ed (Peggy)
and Freda (close family friend).
Oma will be deeply missed by her grandchildren
Melissa, Stephanie, Ben, Jenni, Christie, Lyndsey,
Jason, Brandon, Courtney and Blake,
as well as by her 6 great-grandchildren,
Ian, Taylor, Megan, Summer, Britney and Caleb.

Pastor Ralph Koops conducted the Funeral Service in
the Drayton Christian Reformed Church.
As expressions of sympathy donations to Palmerston
Hospital Foundation would be appreciated by the family.

Arrangements were entrusted to
Heritage Funeral Homes, Drayton.



The Lord called unto
himself
ANDREA (ANN) KRAAY
(nee **Koopmans**)
from the West Lincoln
Memorial Hospital,
Grimsby, on Saturday,
December 17, 2011
at the age of 94 years.

Beloved wife of Simon Kraay for 61 years.
Loving mother of:
Rita and Andy Fluit
John and Nancy Kraay
Neil and Gwen Kraay
Joyce Kraay.
She was the dear oma to 11 grandchildren and
great oma to more than 15 great-grandchildren.
Sister of Kokie and Wim of The Netherlands and
the late Bep Dibbits.

A Memorial Service was held at Mountainview
Christian Reformed Church.
Donations to Christian Blind Mission would be
appreciated by the family.

Friends are invited to send condolences to the
family at www.cooperfuneralhome.ca

Holland
19 Oct. 1914

Brampton
3 Jan. 2012

GRACE VANDYK
On January 3, 2012, the Lord called
our mother home.
She was loved and will be missed by
her children, grandchildren, great-
grandchildren and five great-great-
grandchildren. Predeceased by dad
(2010) after celebrating their 73rd
wedding anniversary.

Ieka and John Vanderkooi
John & Catherine Vandyke
Jerry and Anneka Vandyke
Martha Allin
Bert and Barb Vandyke
Harry and Mary Vandyke
Reta Vandyke.

After a brief illness, the Lord took
LOURENS JAN WIERENGA
home in his 83rd year.
He passed away peacefully at the
Carpenter Hospice on
Thursday January 19, 2012.

Beloved husband of Auke.
Loving father of:
Trudy DeJong (Harvey)
Elly Gilbert
Bert Wierenga
Rick Wierenga (Michele).
Cherished Opa of Justin, Jodi, Joshua, Jillian,
Laurenne, Ben, Kristen, Jaclyn, Mason and
Mya. Also survived by two sisters and five
brothers.

The funeral took place on Saturday January
21st at Burlington Christian Reformed Church.
He will be dearly missed by all.

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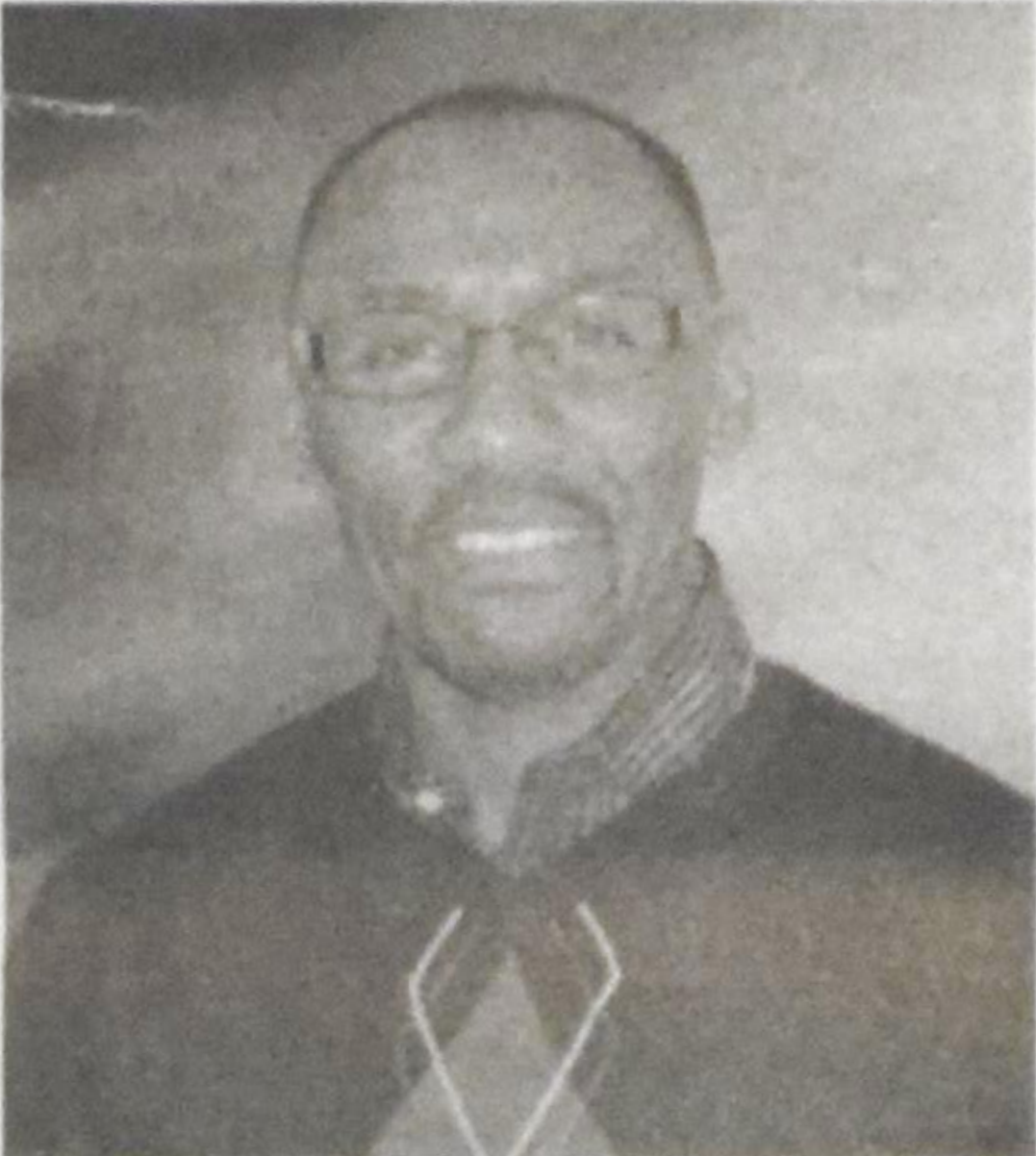
Personal

Female, living in Ontario, in her mid fifties, seeking
to correspond with a Christian male for friend-
ship and open to the possibilities of a long term
relationship. I am energetic, healthy, outgoing and
have a positive outlook on life. My Christian faith
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Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) is pleased to
announce the appointment of
Mr. Steven Kabetu
as its new Canada Director.

As Canada Director, Steve will encourage a vision for
international missions among the congregations and
individuals of the CRC in Canada and provide leadership
to CRWM Canada staff. Steve will be serving out of the
Burlington office.



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Jobs / Advertising

Christ Community Church
of Victoria, B.C.
has an opening for a
part-time youth worker

Please contact the office
at 250-479-3227 or
ccc victoria@shaw.ca
for a copy of the job description.



**Career Opportunity:
Labour Representative**

The Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) is accepting applications for the position of Labour Representative working for the Saskatoon office.

Representatives act as advocates for employees in workplaces unionized by CLAC. Individuals must possess strong communication, analytical, and relational skills along with the desire to apply CLAC's principles and brand of cooperative, solution-oriented labour relations to the workplace community. Previous education or experiences in Labour Relations or Human Resources and/or knowledge of the construction industry are considered assets.

For more information or to submit a resume contact the Saskatoon office at:

saskatoon@clac.ca
or by phone 1-877-649-2522.

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Job Opportunities

See our website, christiancourier.ca for recently published job ads
See p. 20 for King's University College ad.



Fellowship CRC in Brighton, Ontario
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The successful applicant of this part time position would help organize our talented musicians and praise teams, provide leadership and meet with the pastors and worship committee to plan blended worship services and occasionally lead in the ministry of music. Ideal candidate would be able to play piano, guitar or organ.

Please contact Tony Jeronimus 613-475-4455
or tonyj@peakltd.ca.

Full time IT Technician

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Rosa Flora is a large cut flower grower and wholesaler, located in Dunnville, Ontario. At Rosa Flora, we embrace change and initiate opportunities while encouraging innovation. This has allowed us to continually be one of Canada's leading flower producers as well as provide the highest standard for quality, freshness and customer service.

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See ad.

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atre, **Woodstock** 2: 30 pm and
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Mar 17 Woodstock Dutch Theatre
Group presents 'Wie Kaatst...
die Wint.' Memorial Commu-
nity Hall, **Blyth**. 8 pm. See ad.

Mar 23 Woodstock Dutch Theatre
Group presents 'Wie Kaatst...
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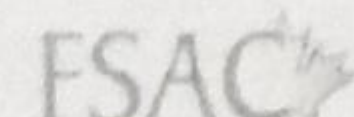
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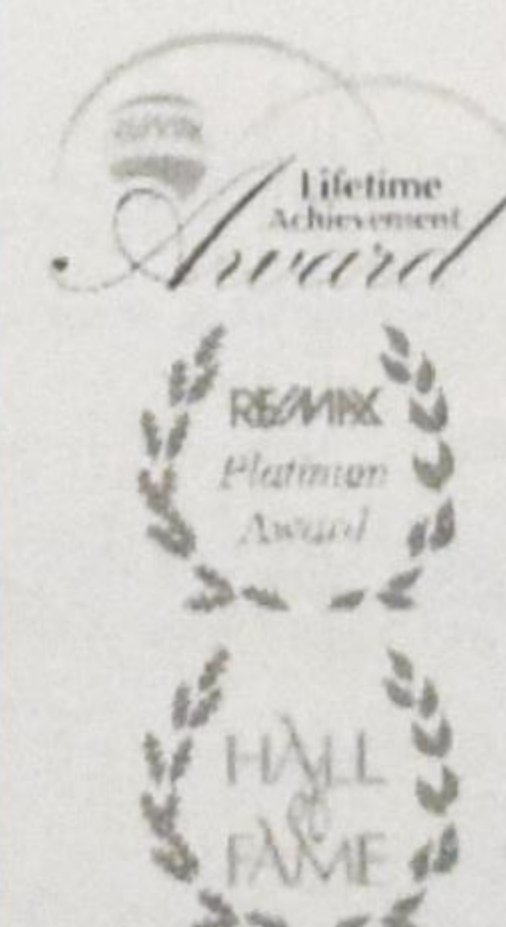
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News

Renewed tensions in the Falklands

Sara Miller Llana

Almost thirty years after Britain and Argentina went to war over the Falkland Islands, tempers are flaring again.

The Falkland Islands (known as the Malvinas among Argentinians) are an archipelago 300 miles off the coast of South America. Two main islands and hundreds of smaller ones make up the territory.

The French, Spanish, and British all established settlements there, but after Argentina declared independence, the South American nation laid claim to the islands in 1820. The British then claimed sovereignty in 1833, and have ever since.

Today about 3,000 people live there. Residents have enjoyed full British citizenship since 1983. Their economy, with a GDP of

about \$165 million a year, is fuelled by fishing and sheep farming. Tourists are also drawn to the view of millions of breeding penguins.

In April 1982, Argentina invaded the islands after decades of unsuccessfully pressing its claim to the territory. At the time of the invasion, Argentina was under military dictatorship. The country occupied the Falklands for ten weeks, but was handily defeated by the British on June 14.

By the end of the 1980s, after years without diplomatic contact, Argentina and Britain worked toward restoring ties and formally did so in 1990.

But the fate of the islands remains a challenge to relations between the nations, particularly over lucrative fishing rights and more recently over oil.

While oil might be the main engine of tension today, many countries in Latin America are asserting a new sense of economic and political independence and supporting Argentina against Britain fits in with that narrative.

Argentina has reiterated that it does not want war. Instead, it

wants a diplomatic solution, insisting that Britain comply with a United Nations resolution calling for negotiations between the two countries. Britain has so far refused to hear Argentina's arguments.

April 2012 will mark the 30th anniversary of Argentina's attempt to take back the islands, and many

question whether Britain is sending a message in deploying Prince William just weeks ahead of the anniversary. The prince is currently serving in the Falklands as a search and rescue helicopter pilot with the Royal Air Force.

Sara Miller Llana is a staff writer with Christian Science Monitor.

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